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Property values on the rise in area

Despite increase, tax revenue remains flat

Darrell Clem
hometownlife.com

Residential property values are witnessing a sustained, post-recession increase in Canton, Plymouth and Plymouth Township, officials say, while the once-lagging commercial and industrial sectors also have begun to rebound. It's good news for residents who saw their home values plummet amid the Great Recession, but it's no tax-revenue windfall for local governments

because of a voter-approved, 23-year-old Proposal A that limits property tax increases to the rate of inflation or 5 percent, whichever is less.

This year, the inflation rate is just under 1 percent, said Doug Shaw, supervisor of WCA Assessing, which handles property assessments for Canton, Plymouth and Plymouth Township, among other communities. That means home values spike while taxes remain flat.

"As Paul the property owner, I'm loving it," Paul Sincock said, but in his job as Plymouth city manager, not so much.

Figures provided by Shaw and Aaron Powers, WCA man-

aging director, show residential property assessments this year spiked 7.3 percent in Plymouth, 4 percent in Plymouth Township and 2.8 percent in Canton. The numbers are based on home sales for a two-year period ending last Sept. 30.

Those numbers "ebb and flow" over the years, Shaw said, and while Canton had a slower increase, it stands to benefit from new home construction.

"Canton Township has the highest amount of growth in Wayne County," Shaw said.

Canton Municipal Services Director Tim Faas said Canton

issued 506 new home permits last year — the best year in a decade. While tapering off some, Canton still is projecting steady construction of hundreds of homes each year for the foreseeable future.

Canton Finance Director Wendy Trumbull said is Canton is expecting an additional \$100,000 in general fund tax revenues this year due to the housing spurt, "not a significant jump," but the amount could be closer to \$200,000 next year.

The latest commercial property values jumped 7.5 percent in Plymouth, 8 percent in Plymouth Township and 3 percent

in Canton.

Industrial property values increased 1.5 percent in Canton, 4.6 percent in Plymouth and a startling 24 percent in Plymouth Township.

"Plymouth Township has had a lot of market activity in the industrial parks to support that change," Shaw said.

Powers said the big spike almost puts Plymouth Township back to pre-recession levels.

Shaw said assessment notices have begun arriving in Plymouth mailboxes, while residents of Canton and Ply-

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The performance space extends the stage out into the audience for a current production.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Park FIRST team unveils 2017 robot

Brad Kadrich
hometownlife.com

Jay Obsniuk believes the creation of a middle school robotics program a few years ago is providing a distinct advantage to Plymouth-Canton's FIRST Lightning Robotics Team 862, the district's high school robotics competition team.

Obsniuk, the team's lead teacher, said the middle school program eases students into the program by providing them the opportunity to work with the high school team, thereby lessening nerves and shortening the learning curve once students move up.

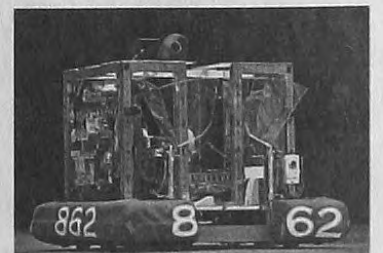
Luke Fenstermacher agrees with his teacher. And Fenstermacher, a Canton High School sophomore, should know. He was named Wednesday night as the lead drive for the 2017 competition team. The announcement came during the team's annual "reveal" event, where the new robot, Valkyrie, was unveiled.

"(The middle school program) definitely taught me a lot more," Fenstermacher said. "I could actually come to (the high school) and know what the parts were. It gave me a programming background."

The 2017 competition season began for Team 862 with the "build" season Jan. 10, three days after the statewide kickoff, when the 134-member team began building Valkyrie, named for a figure in Norse mythology who was one of a host of female figures who chose those who may die in battle and those who may live.

The team spent hundreds of

See ROBOT, Page A2



JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
FIRST Lightning Robotics Team 862 unveils the 2017 competition robot, Valkyrie.

AS PARC GROWS, TAX TALKS BEGIN

Darrell Clem
hometownlife.com

An ambitious plan to boost Plymouth's image as an arts and recreation destination has surpassed early expectations, officials say, and a tax proposal to support the project could go to voters next year.

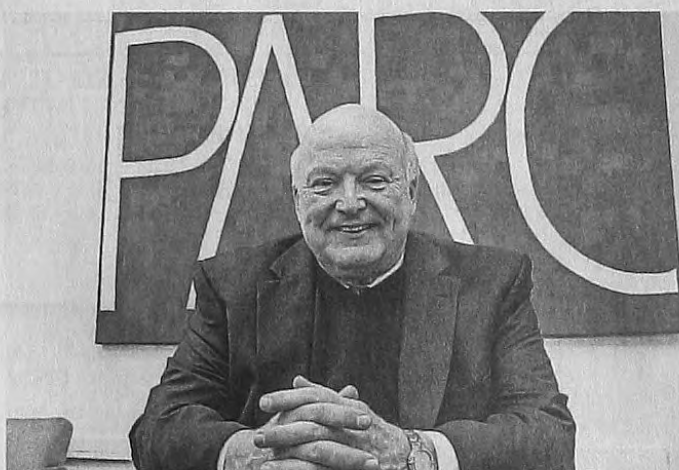
In its first 17 months, the nonprofit Plymouth Arts and Recreation Complex, or PARC, has drawn tenants who lease space for theater productions, fitness programs, youth sports, culinary arts classes, autism consulting, orchestra concerts and arts education, among other programs.

In all, PARC has leased 41 of the 60 rooms inside the former Central Middle School in Plymouth, said Don Soenen, PARC board president. That represents 24 tenants, some of whom lease more than one room. Another 23 community groups rent space only when they need it.

"We've had arts organizations coming in droves," Soenen said.

The Michigan Philharmonic has made its headquarters in what was once the school principal's office.

"We love it here," said Beth Stewart, Michigan Philharmonic executive director. "We



Don Soenen says PARC has exceeded expectations thus far.

BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

have so much room. We like being right in the middle of all the action."

The orchestra, which performs regionally, has some performances in PARC's gymnasium.

PARC emerged as a grassroots movement as Plymouth-Canton Community Schools district officials decided to close the former Central school. A local couple, Mark and Patty Malcolm, paid \$3.5 million for the site and the nonprofit PARC leases and rents space to cover operating expenses.

Soenen said PARC still needs money to renovate the three-story building and fulfill a vision to have an 800-seat auditorium. That's where a tax proposal comes in, tentatively in spring 2018, though the amount isn't known. It would go before voters in Plymouth and Plymouth Township.

Soenen said much work remains between now and then:

» PARC has to get its site plan approved by the city of Plymouth.

» Officials will try to raise as much money as possible

through private fundraising, before seeking a tax. Some sources already have been identified.

» An economic impact study will be done to help determine the financial boost the PARC facility could have on the area.

» PARC officials plan to finalize their business plan and conduct public forums to educate the community on the PARC vision.

Marsha Kreza, PARC marketing consultant, described the PARC project as a way to bring together people who have diverse interests in arts, recreation and education, whether they prefer theater or musical performances or other offerings.

"It's really exciting," she said.

Gail Grieger, PARC executive director, said PARC is expected to broaden its reach as it grows.

"We see PARC as the destination in Plymouth," she said. "When you think of Plymouth, you will think of PARC. It represents so much of what Plymouth stands for — and that's community."

The 160,000-square-foot building, located at 650

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Volume 42 • Number 73

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PARC

Continued from Page A1

Church St., sits on 16.6 acres that include numerous athletic fields. It's a place where young children can swim or play sports while senior citizens can find fitness programs or social gatherings. One theater group, Forever After Productions, makes PARC its home and performs its shows there.

PARC has had some detractors and the project became a political football in last year's Plymouth Township election. Kurt Heise, the township's new supervisor, said he supports PARC, but said officials still need to lay out a firm plan as a tax increase is sought.

"I think PARC provides a valuable service to the community. It's a nonprofit that fills in many of the gaps in recreation and senior services which the city



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Forever After Productions, a theater company, now has all of its resources at the PARC.

and the township cannot provide," Heise said. "I know they have some very ambitious plans for the future and, at this time, I'm still in a wait-and-see mode. ... They are going to have to demonstrate their ability to deliver. (But) I support what they're doing. I believe PARC provides a valuable community service to our taxpayers."

dclm@hometownlife.com
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ROBOT

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hours building the robot that will compete in the 2017 game, "FIRST Steamworks," during which Valkyrie will be required to accomplish a variety of tasks, including collecting balls for fuel and delivering gears to help get an airship moving. Team members talked Wednesday about hitting "glitches," but were able to beat the 11:59 p.m. Tuesday deadline by an hour.

Obsniuk and the team's mentors, who prefer students be the team's leaders rather than the adults, worked right up to the final hour overcoming any problems that came up in order to meet the deadline.

"We want the students to figure it out," Obsniuk said. "We (mentors) could jump in and tell them what's wrong, but this is a better learning experience. Everyone worked hard, the students and mentors were amazing and everything just came together."

The 134-member team is the largest in program history, driven this year



JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Team president Allison Hurley demonstrates Valkyrie while team lead teacher Jay Obsniuk looks on.

largely by underclassmen. Obsniuk said the team is "bottom heavy," containing more freshmen and sophomores than it has juniors and seniors. That speaks largely to the value of the middle school program.

"Hopefully, it gives us a couple of extra years to mold them," Obsniuk said. "When they get here, they're not afraid of the school, they're not afraid of the program."

For the 11th year, the program is once again heavily sponsored by the Bosch Corp., which sponsors 21 FIRST Robotics

teams around the country. The partnership has been a good one for both sides — Bosch provides not only financial sponsorship, but also has several people mentoring the program. Plus, Bosch has handed out more than a dozen internships or outright jobs to P-CEP graduates.

Sponsoring the robotics teams gives the company a chance to further the legacy of its founder, Robert Bosch.

"It goes back to our beginnings," said Brad McKenna, the company's manager of corporate

citizenship. "(Robert Bosch) was all about community. We want to continue his legacy. One of the ways we can do that is to invest in FIRST robotics and investing in the kids."

Team 862 is nearly completely student-led. There's a slate of officers and a slew of sub-group leaders, along with the rest of the team members. While Bosch engineers and other adult mentors are available for guidance, decisions are made by the students, a set-up rare among high school robotics teams, according to Obsniuk.

"It teaches us leadership and how to manage groups of people," said Canton High School junior Caitlin Schwartz, the team's secretary. "It helps prepare ourselves for when we go out into the workplace."

Now the driver empowered to propel the robot — and the team — to victory is honored to be chosen.

"It means so much to me the team would trust me driving the robot we built together," Fenstermacher said. "But we rely on each other. It really is a team effort."

bkdrich@hometownlife.com

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Observer & Eccentric Newspapers PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Published Sunday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Media

Newsroom Contacts

Joanne Maliszewski, Print Content Editor
Mobile: 248-396-6620; Email: jmaliszews@hometownlife.com

Brad Kadrich, Reporting Coach
Mobile: 586-262-9892; Email: bkdrich@hometownlife.com



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VALUES

Continued from Page A1

mouth Township should receive theirs within days. Property owners who believe their assessments are wrong may file an appeal with the local Board of Review.

Plymouth City Finance Director Mark Christiansen said 1994's Proposal A, coupled with the state Headlee Amendment, severely limits property tax revenue increases for municipalities. And while he said Plymouth expects to receive \$209,633 in new tax revenue this year, it is mostly from new construction rather than existing homes.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Property values are up this year in Canton, Plymouth and Plymouth Township.

Christiansen said Plymouth was fortunate that its property values, during the recession, didn't plunge as much as

in some communities. Still, he said, the city's ability to recoup revenue losses has been hampered by existing laws.

While the taxable value of homes has been limited by the inflation rate in recent years, that changes if a house is sold. When a sale occurs and the so-called "cap" is lifted, the taxable value is brought up to the assessed value, with the new owner paying higher taxes than the previous owner.

Plymouth Township Trustee Chuck Curmi said that has proved unfair to new home buyers who are shelling out substantially more in property taxes than someone who has a similar home they have lived in for years. But he said

the biggest tax issue for Plymouth Township was when voters last year approved a 2-mill tax increase for Wayne County Regional Educational Agency, which provides support to local school districts.

"In recent memory, it is absolutely the biggest tax increase in Plymouth Township," Curmi said.

Going forward, local officials such as Canton Township Supervisor Pat Williams say they want to see their communities continue to prosper and, as part of that, enjoy a steady increase in property values. Property assessments in recent years indicate that is likely to happen.

"Part of our turnaround story in Canton Township is the good fortune of sustained growth that we have had in our residential community to inch us closer back to the revenue levels before the crash," he said.

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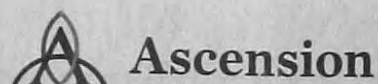


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ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING NOTICE CITY OF PLYMOUTH, MICHIGAN (734) 453-1234

A special meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals will be held on Thursday, March 9, 2017 at 6:00 P.M. in the Commission Chambers of the City Hall, 201 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI, to consider the following:

Z 17-05 402 Ann
Non-Use Variance Requested
Side yard setback
Zoned: R-1, Single Family Residential
Applicant: Cowdin Design + Build

All interested persons are invited to attend.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Plymouth will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting/hearing, to individuals with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids or services may be made by writing or calling the following:

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Published: Sunday, February 26, 2017

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Main Street Opera features hometown soprano

Main Street Opera will feature Plymouth resident and soprano Mary Martin and chamber musician and vocal coach Mariah Boucher in concert, Masters of the Voice Recital Series, at 5 p.m. Saturday, March 25, at the Woodside Bible Church, 42021 E. Ann Arbor Trail.

Known for her soprano voice, Martin holds bachelor's and master's degrees in voice performance from the University of Michigan, where she studied under Melody Racine. University credits include the roles of Susanna ("Le Nozze di Figaro"), Nannetta ("Falstaff"), Amy ("Little Women"), the Queen of the Night ("Die Zauberflöte") and Fire ("L'Enfant et les Sortilèges"). With the Janiec Opera Co.: Mabel ("The



Boucher

Pirates of Penzance"), First Spirit ("Die Zauberflöte"), Ernestina Money ("Hello, Dolly!") and Olympia ("Les Contes d'Hoffmann").

Martin has also performed as a young artist with the prestigious Central City Opera Co. in Colorado, the highest altitude opera house in America at 8,500-feet above sea level. Most

recently, Martin worked with the Motor City Lyric Opera's Opera on Wheels program, where she sang the Queen of the Night and First Lady in the company's outreach production of "The Magic Flute." The program targeted the education and exposure of opera to metro Detroit students. She has also sung with the Midland Symphony



Martin

Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theater, the Livingston Symphony Orchestra, the Michigan Pops, University of Michigan Orpheus Singers, the Saginaw Choral Society, Victor Herbert Society and the Community

Chorus of Detroit. In New York, Martin performed the Queen of the Night with the New York City Opera Exchange.

Boucher frequently performs in recitals featuring singers and instrumentalists and has been a featured soloist with orchestras performing the concerti of Mendelssohn and Ravel. She has joined with chamber partners Dennis Carter (flute) and Lisa Raschiatore (clarinet) and Jennifer Goltz (voice) to perform at the art space "Trinosophes."

She has worked closely with composers Michael Daugherty, Gabriela Lena Frank and Evan Chambers premiering and exploring new music. As an opera enthusiast, Boucher has performed and coached Puccini's "La Boheme," Humper-

dinck's "Hänsel und Gretel," Donizetti's "L'elisir d'amore" and Mozart's "Cosi fan Tutte." She also has joined in numerous outreach programs to bring opera to elementary schools throughout the Detroit area. Studying with Martin Katz, Logan Skelton and Katherine Collier, Boucher completed her M.M. and D.M.A. at the University of Michigan in collaborative piano. Boucher currently serves as the visiting assistant professor of collaborative piano at Indiana University, as well as a vocal coach at Notre Dame University.

Tickets are \$15 per person for general seating. Tickets may be purchased online at https://www.mainstreetoperatheatre.org/store/ci/Featured_Products.html.

Plymouth Christian Academy students play like champions

Plymouth Christian Academy in Canton is partnering with the Play Like a Champion Today Character Education Through Sports program next month.

"Play Like a Champion sees coaching as a form of ministry and challenges coaches to develop the whole athlete: physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Our school looks forward to gaining tools to enhance our school's athletic experience," said Caryn Huntsman, superintendent and secondary principal.

A parent workshop is scheduled for 5:30-6:45 p.m. Friday, March 3, at the school, 43065 Joy Road. A coach clinic is set for 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 4, and an athlete workshop will follow at 2-3 p.m., both in the Plymouth Christian Academy library.

Winning-at-all-costs

coaching, sports specialization, and parent "sports rage" are just a few of the problems eroding the culture of sports today. The Play Like a Champion Today program is designed to provide children and adolescents with the highest quality sports experience possible. The program's resources are developed in collaboration with faculty at the University of Notre Dame's Shaw Center for Children and Families and with social scientists, philosophers, theologians, sport scientists and physicians in universities nationally and internationally.

Play Like a Champion aims to renew the culture of youth sports by educating coaches to move beyond the X's and O's of coaching to address the core elements of effective coaching: 1. motivation, 2. team-

building, 3. leadership. Research-based and ethically-directed, Play Like a Champion designs its educational programs to nurture personal, moral and spiritual development along with athletic excellence for all athletes.

By partnering with Play Like a Champion, Plymouth Christian brings its "Coaching as Ministry" clinic, parent workshop and athlete programming to its school community. Play Like a Champion program director Kristin Sheehan will travel to the area to conduct the trainings in the school's sport community. These trainings officially launch a partnership with Play Like a Champion and Plymouth Christian Eagles.

Middle school and high school coaches will hear the "champion" message throughout an

interactive four-hour workshop. In addition to offering coach workshops, Play Like a Champion offers the Parent Like a Champion program, an interactive workshop for sport parents. The parent workshop seeks not only to respond to all too frequent incidents of "sideline rage," but also seeks to give parents sound advice on how to positively guide their children through their youth and high school sport careers.

Parents receive education and materials that help them reinforce the goals of character development through sport stressed by the program. Parents also receive guidance on how they can help their children to form habits of perseverance, sound decision-making, team work, good nutrition and regular exercise. Rounding out

the comprehensive nature of the partnership, Play Like a Champion will work with all student athletes engaging them in discussion of "Servant Leadership."

Workshop evaluation data confirm the effectiveness of the Play Like a Champion Today program. For example, more than 90 percent of coaches attending the clinics were satisfied with the experience, and agreed to fully implement the champion approach to coaching for character development. When asked about the impact of the workshop, sport parents strongly agreed that they would commit to being a more positive presence from the sidelines by avoiding coaching their child from the sidelines (86 percent). This was a 21-percent increase from before to after the parent workshop.

Play Like a Champion Today coach workshops are nationally accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education. The initiative enjoys partnership with more than 150 sport organizations throughout 42 states. Since the program's inception in 2006, Play Like a Champion has educated more than 100,000 coaches and parents, who in turn have impacted the lives of over a million athletes.

A recent coach clinic participant commented about the program, "Play Like a Champion material is top-notch, the message is solid and grounded on research. Thank you for helping me make sports more fun, character-based and developmentally-focused."



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Teen accused of plotting to kill family wants new trial

Darrell Clem
hometownlife.com



FILE PHOTO

Roksana Gabriela Sikorski wants to withdraw her guilty plea.

A Plymouth Township teen accused of plotting with her boyfriend to kill her family is seeking to withdraw a guilty plea that landed her in prison for 10-20 years.

Roksana Gabriela Sikorski, 17, has asked for a new trial by claiming she received ineffective counsel from a defense attorney when she pleaded guilty in February 2016 to a charge of assault with intent to murder, Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Maria Miller confirmed.

Testimony is expected to resume March 10 in front of Wayne County Circuit Judge Thomas Hathaway, who will have to weigh evidence and rule on a motion to determine whether Sikorski's guilty plea stands or should be withdrawn.

Sikorski is being represented by the state appellate defender's office.

She was only 15 in October 2014, when she was accused of plotting to kill her family inside their Plymouth Township home. During the early morning hours of Oct. 14, authorities said she had a knife, went into her then-12-year-old brother's bedroom, put her hand over his mouth and held the weapon to his throat.

He screamed and the knife cut deep into his throat, authorities have said, but he survived. He and his younger sister, then 11, were able to alert their parents, Laurene and Jeff Sikorski.

Police have said Sikorski fled the scene, but was arrested later that day with boyfriend Michael Angelo Rivera, then 23, who is spending life in

prison after a jury convicted him of assault with intent to murder, four counts of conspiracy, one count of using a computer to commit a crime and felonious assault.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthly has said Rivera allegedly was texting instructions to Sikorski from outside the house when the attack occurred.

Sikorski's parents had reportedly tried to end their daughter's relationship with Rivera. They have stood by her, saying she suffered from depression and was manipulated by Rivera. They contended she needed medical help, not prison, and they said the criminal justice system failed her.

Sikorski took a plea deal to one count of assault with intent to murder and authorities dismissed six other felony charges.

Rivera, along with his sentence to life in prison for his role in the Sikorski family case, also was sentenced to 30 months to 15 years in prison for having sex with Sikorski when she was 15.

Staff writer Matt Jachman contributed to this story.

dclm@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @CantonObserver
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Camp A.B.L.E. staff members (from left) Rebecca King and Amy Markey receive a check from Corvette Legends Club president Jim Rees, along with other Camp A.B.L.E. staff: Marcela Mejia, Jordan Turbaro and Brandi Dunn.

Corvette Legends Club helps Camp A.B.L.E.

Camp A.B.L.E., a state-licensed summer camp operated by Canton Leisure Services that is specifically designed for children ages 8-14 with disabilities, recently received a \$1,200 donation from the Corvette Legends Club from the 12th annual Corvettes at the Summit car show last summer.

"We couldn't be more appreciative of the Corvette Legends Club's generous decision to donate funds from their summer car show to Camp A.B.L.E.," said Jennifer Girard, recreation specialist. "Providing a traditional summer camp experience with adaptations that keep activities fun and inclusive, despite the wide range of disabilities that often challenge our

campers, isn't always easy, but it is always worth it for us."

Camp A.B.L.E., which stands for Achieve, Believe, Learn and Experience, is one of several activities and services offered by Canton Township's Therapeutic Recreation program. Therapeutic Recreation offers year-round program opportunities, socialization and support for individuals with disabilities of all ages residing in western Wayne County.

For more than 17 summers, this camp has been extremely successful and has set the precedent for Therapeutic Recreation camps to be modeled after throughout western Wayne County. Participants take part in a variety of

activities throughout the day, interacting with their peers, enhancing social skills, gross and fine motor skills and gaining independence. Camp A.B.L.E. runs Monday through Friday and consists of three field trips per week, with two days of specially planned activities at the camp site and swimming at The Summit Aquatics Center.

Corvette Legends is a small club of Corvette enthusiasts from the Detroit area who share a common bond of having fun in their Corvettes. Group activities include social events, car shows, cruise nights, color tours and trips. Proceeds from its events are donated to local charities. For additional information about the Corvette Legends

Club, go to www.corvettelegends.net.

Corvette Legends Club is set to host the 13th annual Corvettes at the Summit car show July 8 in Heritage Park, located behind the Canton Administration Building at 1150 S. Canton Center Road. This year's event will feature food, music, prizes and America's favorite sports car – the Corvette. In addition, this year's car show will be the first in the country to have a C7 Corvette on display. Funds raised during the event will also be donated to Camp A.B.L.E.

For more information on Camp A.B.L.E., go to www.cantonfun.org or call 734-394-5460.

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HALF-PIPE HERO LANDS ON HIS FEET

Skateboarder lost his sight, but not his desire for air

Emma Ockerman
Detroit Free Press

George Leichtweis, the owner of Modern Skate & Surf in Royal Oak, says skateboarding is one of the few sports where it's just you versus yourself — the frustratingly glorious battle of trying, trashing and then landing a trick one day, only to attempt to outdo yourself later.

On any given night in his park there's a cacophonous symphony of urethane wheels slapping concrete floor. More often than not, there's also the rumbling roll of Nick Mullins' skateboard as it glides back and forth on the 6-foot ramp.

Modern Skate is the 25-year-old Mullin's known turf, and many skateboarders and inline skaters paused to watch him own it one night last month.

"Now he's doing just ridiculous stuff," Leichtweis said. "He does some of the most amazing stuff I've ever seen on a half-pipe."

Mullins has always been good, and he's been getting better. He attributes that to not having to think so much anymore about how he can't see his board or the ramp ahead of him.

The Clinton Township resident has been blind for several years now, so skateboarding is back to Mullins versus Mullins instead of Mullins versus blindness, or Mullins versus the near-deadly bacterial infection that left him without his sight.

The battle to regain his footing and his spirit, Mullins said, began with deciding he didn't want to be defined by an illness anymore.

Even if a skateboarding accident nearly killed him, he wasn't about to give up the sport that made him excited to be alive.

Mullins figured he was dying when he



Nick Mullins, 25, skateboards at Modern Skate & Surf in Royal Oak. Mullins was a local star on the half-pipe when he contracted a bacterial infection that nearly killed him and left him blind. SALWAN GEORGES | DETROIT FREE PRESS

called his father one summer day in 2009. By the time a doctor correctly diagnosed him with Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), the then 18-year-old was — in his words — "out."

After a survival flight from the University of Michigan Health System brought Mullins from a Toledo-area hospital to Ann Arbor, his father, Jimmy Mullins, spent a night in the hospital's chapel calling family.

He was sure his son wouldn't make it through the night.

Nick Mullins was in septic shock by the time he hit the intensive care unit.

"Nick was so tough," said Jimmy Mullins, 57, of Toledo.

The bacterial infection caused severe pus-filled abscesses in his lungs and multisystem organ failure.

During the 1½ months he was heavily sedated and undergoing neuromuscular blockades to paralyze him while he received treatment for his community-associated MRSA, he couldn't have known that he had suddenly become the nationally renowned skateboarder he had always hoped to be.

It would be awhile before he realized that videos of him skateboarding had gone viral and professional skateboarders were rooting for his return.

Even his doctors remember hearing comments from skateboarders across the country and seeing videos of Mullins skating.

"He was just a beautiful, instinctive skater and athlete," said Dr. Pauline Park, codirector of the surgical intensive care unit at the U-M Health System.

He had just escaped a death sentence, but friends said he was still talking about skateboarding.

"I weighed 90 pounds, just literally didn't want to talk to anyone. I couldn't eat. I had to put myself in my own rehab," Mullins said. "It was difficult, I couldn't see. Everyone was there for me, but I didn't even know. I had no idea what happened."

Mullins was blind — save for a small part of the peripheral vision in his left eye. He had severe lung damage.

Jimmy Mullins said the boy lying in the hospital bed hardly looked like Nick.

Then, a few months

later, he saw tough-guy Nick return. The always-independent son was standing on his skateboard in the middle of their family driveway in Toledo.

Even if a skateboarding accident nearly killed him, he wasn't about to give up on the sport that made him excited to be alive.

"That's when I knew it wasn't the end," Nick Mullins said. "I could eat again, I could be myself."

A few weeks after he got out of the hospital, Staffan filmed an interview with Mullins and posted it to YouTube. Mullins is skinny and pallid in the video. The song from his Berrics debut, Metric's "Help I'm Alive," plays in the background.

One title slide reads: Steve Berra and the Berrics have been a big part of making your story known, anything you want to say to them?

"You guys helped out and everything," Mullins said. "Thank you so much, I wish I could do something for you guys. Just, thank you."

He said he'd be back on a skateboard within three to six months. A few videos on YouTube seemed to prove that he kept his word and

showed him skating around local parks. Then he moved to Phoenix, and then to Traverse City, and people didn't hear from him for awhile. Staffan, 30, of Toledo, said e-mails kept flowing in: Where's Nick? Is he alive? Can he see?

"What was really weird was that it was like a reality show. All these rumors got started," Staffan said.

In 2014, Mullins posted his own video.

"I'm Nick Mullins, I'm 23 years old, and I'm considered legally blind," he told the camera, smiling and wearing sunglasses.

"I took a short break from skateboarding," he added. "Now I'm back skating, having a lot of fun."

Leichtweis said Mullins has become somewhat of a regional legend. Sometimes people forget he's blind when they see him skate, or at least think he's regained his sight.

Friends and family drive Mullins the 45 minutes to Modern Skate two or three times a week in the winter. Leichtweis asks him not to pay to skate.

"I tell people, 'Go up this ramp and close your

eyes and drop in.' Nobody would do that," he said. "He's become quite a legend around here because he's very talented, and he didn't allow his issues with not seeing to inhibit the way he looks at life. That alone shows an example to all the younger kids here."

The 16-year-old skateboarder manning the front desk of Modern said he's almost intimidated to talk to Mullins, adding that he's a hometown hero.

"He's just so inspiring," said Matt Reschke, an employee at Modern Skate. "He's really good."

Skateboarding for Mullins, though, is not about being good. It's about staying on your board. Maybe in the future, Mullins said, he'll travel the county and talk to other skateboarders and let them know that they can overcome their self-doubts and anxieties, too. Or he could own a clothing company.

After believing he was about to die — and then that he might never skate again — Mullins said it took a lot to get back on his feet.

"You lost your vision, you still have your arms and legs," Mullins said. "Just get up and live."

Greater Farmington Film Festival announces lineup

Farmington-Hills based nonprofit organization kickstART Farmington announces the film lineup and schedule for the 2017 Greater Farmington Film Festival.

The Greater Farmington Film Festival will be March 2-5, with a selection of recently released feature films and documentaries that engage the heart and mind, explore important contemporary issues and inspire action: good films for a better world.

The line up includes: "Death Is Not the Answer" (documentary, 95 minutes), directed by Keith Famie. Show time is 7:30 p.m. March 2, at the Smith Theatre at Oakland Community College

"Death Is Not the Answer" delves deeply into the complex, often misunderstood world of depression and suicide. This documentary features many of the nation's most respected mental health professionals. The film also offers enlightened thoughts of how we can find contentment and happiness through mind-body health, diet and music. In the end, the film offers hope and a much deeper understanding about depression and what

leads to suicide. A Q&A with Famie and others featured in the film to follow the screening.

"Maya Angelou, And Still I Rise" (documentary, 114 minutes), directed by Bob Hercules and Rita Coburn Whac, at 7 p.m. March 3, at the Farmington Civic Theater.

The first documentary about the iconic writer, poet, performer and activist who overcame racism and devastating abuse to become one of our culture's greatest voices. Rare footage and photos unveil an intimate and often unknown view of her public and personal life with the power of her own words.

"Life, Animated" (documentary, 89 minutes), directed by Roger Ross Williams. Show time is 9:15 p.m. March 3, at the Farmington Civic Theater.

"Life, Animated" is the real-life story of Owen Suskind, son of the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ron Suskind and his wife Cornelia. An autistic boy who couldn't speak for years, Owen memorized dozens of Disney movies, turned them into a language to express love and loss, kinship, brotherhood. The family was forced to

become animated characters, communicating with him in Disney dialogue and song, until they all emerge, together, revealing how, in darkness, we all literally need stories to survive.

"Zootopia" (animated, 110 minutes) at 10 a.m. March 4, the Farmington Civic Theater. This is a free show.

This film presentation is made possible by the generous support of the Farmington Public Library and Friends of the Library.

From the largest elephant to the smallest shrew, the city of Zootopia is a mammal metropolis where various animals live and thrive.

When Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin) becomes the first rabbit to join the police force, she quickly learns how tough it is to enforce the law. Determined to prove herself, Judy jumps at the opportunity to solve a mysterious case. Unfortunately, that means working with Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman), a wily fox who makes her job even harder.

"The genius of 'Zootopia' is that it works on two levels: it's both a timely and clever examination of the prejudices endemic to society and

an entertaining, funny adventure about furry creatures," according to Jen Chaney of The Washington Post.

"After Spring" (documentary, 101 minutes), directed by Steph Ching and Ellen Martinez, at 7 p.m. March 4, the Farmington Civic Theater.

Presentation of "After Spring" is made possible by the generous support of Christine and Bob Greig and David Richardson and Debbie Feit.

"After Spring" is a feature documentary that focuses on the Syrian refugee crisis. With the Syrian conflict now in its sixth year, millions of people continue to be displaced.

"After Spring" is the story of what happens next. By following two refugee families in transition and aid workers fighting to keep the camp running, viewers will experience what it is like to live in Zaatari, Jordan, the largest camp for Syrian refugees. With no end in sight for the conflict or this refugee crisis, everyone must decide if they can rebuild their lives in a place that was never meant to be permanent.

"The Eagle Huntress" (documentary, 111 minutes), directed by Otto Bell, at 9:15 p.m. March 4,

at the Farmington Civic Theater.

Aishol-pan, a 13-year-old girl, trains to become the first female in 12 generations of her Kazakh family to become an eagle hunter and rises to the pinnacle of a tradition that has been handed down from father to son for centuries. While there are many old Kazakh eagle hunters who vehemently reject the idea of any female taking part in their ancient tradition, Aishol-pan's father, Nurgaiv, believes that a girl can do anything a boy can, as long as she's determined.

"The Last Laugh" (documentary, 85 minutes), directed by Ferne Pearlstein, at 2 p.m. March 5, at the Holocaust Memorial Center on Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills.

Presentation of "The Last Laugh" is made possible by the generous support of Bloom General Contracting, Inc.

"The Last Laugh" is a

feature documentary that proceeds from the premise that the Holocaust would seem to be an absolutely off-limits topic for comedy. But is it? History shows that even the victims of the Nazi concentration camps themselves used humor as a means of survival and resistance. Still, any use of comedy in connection with this horror risks diminishing the suffering of millions. So where is the line? If we make the Holocaust off-limits, what are the implications for other controversial subjects — 9/11, AIDS, racism — in a society that prizes freedom of speech?

Tickets are on sale at www.gffilmfest.com and are \$6 each or a full festival pass can be purchased for \$30 (six films for the price of five); the children's film "Zootopia" is presented free.

More information about the festival is available at www.gffilmfest.com.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF FRANKLIN COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: CASE NO. 16FVM1
PETITION OF JONATHAN ADAM SIDES
TO ADOPT CECELIA ALLMOND,
A MINOR CHILD.

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR ADOPTION

TO: NATHAN ALLMOND

By order of the Court for Service by Publication dated February 6, 2017, you are hereby notified that on October 13, 2016, Jonathan Adam Sides filed suit against you for adoption. You are required to file with the Clerk of Superior Court and to serve upon Plaintiff's attorney, Justin Berelc, an answer in writing within sixty (60) days of the Order of Publication.

Witness the Honorable Jeffery S. Malcom, of the Superior Court of Franklin County.

This the 10th day of February, 2017.

Melissa B. Holmbeck
Clerk, Franklin County Superior Court

Published: February 19, 26 & March 5, 12, 2017

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Published: February 26 & March 5, 2017

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I am an American We are One Nation

HEART-SHAPED GLASSES SHOW LOVE

Tara Ijai gets suspicious looks but chooses to see things in a positive light

KARINA BLAND
USA TODAY NETWORK

Each week, this series will introduce you to an exceptional American who is making a difference to unite, rather than divide, our communities. To read more about the American profiled here and more average Americans doing exceptional things, visit oneration.usatoday.com.

Tara Ijai was 28 when she converted to Islam and chose to wear a hijab, a head covering worn by Muslim women.

Two months later, on Sept. 11, 2001, her faith made her a target.

Ijai's father called her in Arizona and asked her not to wear her hijab. He was afraid someone might hurt her.

But Ijai told him, "I chose this. I believe in this."

Fourteen years later, she walked into a restaurant in Los Angeles. She was there with her mother and sister for a shopping weekend. A television was tuned to the news, about the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California.

Ijai, wearing her hijab, could feel people looking at her.

"Are they afraid of me?" she thought. Later, Ijai called her brother, Brad Boulrice, in Texas.

When they hung up, Ijai's phone buzzed. Boulrice had sent her a picture of a guinea pig wearing heart-shaped glasses, with a caption: "I can't see all the haters with my love glasses on."

Ijai bought herself a pair of heart-shaped sunglasses.

When people complimented her glasses, she explained them:

"These are my love glasses. I choose to see the world with love." She bought more and gave them away, ordered more and sold some so she could buy still more.

She called her Facebook page and website "Love Glasses Revolution." She sells heart-shaped glasses and donates a portion of the proceeds to nonprofit groups.

Last Halloween, Ijai was in the parking lot of a grocery store in Scottsdale when a car slowed down. A man leaned



DAVID KADLUBOWSKI/USA TODAY NETWORK/PHOTO ILLUSTRATION
Tara Ijai is a Muslim woman who started wearing heart-shaped glasses as a way of reminding herself to see the love, not the hate.

out of the open window. "Hey!" he yelled at her. "Nice costume." When she didn't respond, he pulled closer and yelled again. "Hey, nice costume!" Ijai looked at him through her heart-shaped glasses. "Hey, thanks!" she said, and then held up one hand in a peace sign. Because she can't see the haters with her love glasses on.

Tara Ijai

Location: Phoenix

Age: 43

Profession: Founder, Love Glasses Revolution; mother of two

Mission: To encourage people to see the world with love

More info: www.loveglassesrevolution.com

ONE NATION NOMINATE AN AMERICAN

Who are your American heroes? Share stories and nominees at oneration.usatoday.com or via email to onenation@usatoday.com or post a video submission to Twitter, Facebook or Instagram (no longer than 2 minutes, please) with the hashtags #IAmAnAmerican #WeAreOneNation.

Q&A WITH TARA IJAI

What does it mean to you to be an American?

"It's what makes me me. It's what makes it OK to be me. You can be you. I can be me. We can all be American."

What moment touched and motivated you to launch this effort?

She pushed on her first pair of heart-shaped glasses. "I realized I had a choice. I had a choice how I wanted to show up in the world. And I had a choice of how I wanted to see the world. I would see the world with love."

After that, it wasn't one single moment but countless interactions with people after she began wearing her heart-shaped glasses that prompted her to launch Love Glasses Revolution. People wanted to do something. Ijai has reveled in the stories and pictures people who bought glasses send to her. They sign up to be love advocates and advocate for equality. "We decided love is just bigger," Ijai said.

What gives you hope?

How many people ask, "How can I see things differently? How can I get involved?" How many people are wearing love glasses?

"All of a sudden people were in Ireland wearing love glasses, in Australia, Canada, all over. We have a team of doctors in Colorado who were wearing love glasses after a woman's hip surgery." People of all races, of all religions.

And how when she shows up at marches and demonstrations with a 12-foot banner that says, "Love for all," people flock to it and push them to the front of the group. At an immigration march in Tempe, instead of "Down with Trump," they chanted, "Love for all." "That's the thing that makes me so excited, that we can actually change the message," Ijai said. "We can make a difference."

What do you hope to accomplish through your efforts?

She hopes people will focus on what makes us the same instead of our differences. So she will keep showing up, wearing her hijab. "I know it changes the narrative. They want me to be scary. They want me to be foreign. They want me to be different," she said.

"I'm just going to keep showing up in love."

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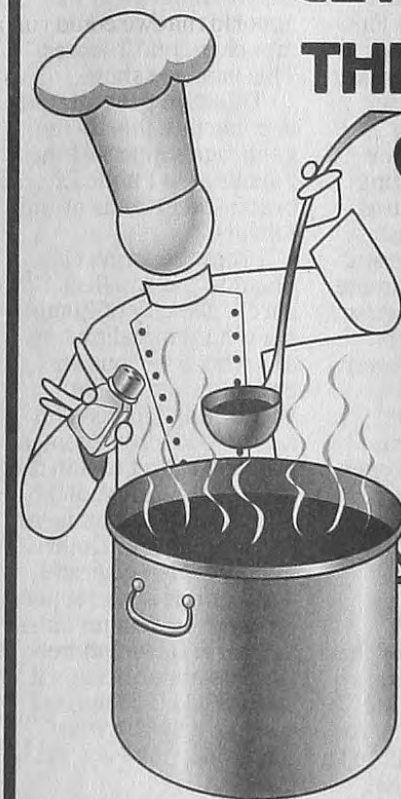
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Two P-CEP students make a musical difference



Students Stacey Partain (right) and Abbey Sexton, with charity founder Lena Pernell.

Plymouth-Canton Educational Park seniors Abbey Sexton and Stacey Partain are giving back to the community. Both students are members of the National Honor Society and also involved in the performing arts at the P-CEP National Honor Society members are expected to "be of service to their community." They are doing exactly that using music.

On Feb. 11, the two planned, produced and directed a charity concert benefiting local Detroit charity Real Life, My Music. The benefit performance was held at the Plymouth Arts and Recreational Complex (the old Central Middle School) and featured 19 separate musical acts. The performers were student musicians from P-CEP and included vocal groups, soloists, rock bands, classical ensembles and more.

The concert raised more than \$2,500 for Real Life, My Music, whose mission is to cre-

ate a safer and healthier Detroit for school children by providing them access to quality after-school programming that emphasizes training in fine arts, specifically music and dance.

"This event is exactly what Real Life, My Music is about," charity founder Lena Pernell said as she thanked the P-CEP students. "Our programs bridge the gap for students that attend the many Detroit schools that have no art or music programs."

Sexton and Partain spent countless hours arranging the event. Not only did they secure the theater, create stage props, advertise the show and direct the performances, they also convinced dozens of their high school peers to help by performing in the event. In the fall, Sexton plans to attend Western Michigan University and study music therapy. Partain plans to attend Michigan State and pursue a law degree.

Northville couple quit jobs to start travel firm

Frank Witsil
Detroit Free Press

Husband and wife entrepreneurs Jim and Julie Welsh quit successful jobs in finance to create their own: They now have their own company, Amaze Travel. It's an agency that, in the age of name-your-price online travel agencies, caters to people seeking luxury — and personal — experiences.

"We like to throw in extra touches that make for special moments that you wouldn't be able to make a reservation for," Julie Welsh, 38, said. "No two trips are the same."

Last year, the Welches had the entire Louvre in Paris closed down for three hours so their clients — a couple — could go on a private, romantic tour of the museum, a former home of French kings. The cost for that rare and unusual experience: \$15,000-\$20,000. That's not including the rest of the vacation.

But, not every trip experience they set up is that glamorous — or that expensive.

For clients vacationing in London during the winter holidays, the Welches had a Christmas tree set up in their room.

"We just love to have clients be happy, even if it's not the most exotic trip," said Jim Welsh, 37. "Client happiness is a big thing for us."

The Welches don't charge their clients directly. They make their money through sales commissions with the companies providing travel and accommodations.

For now, the business is run out of their Northville home, and there are no other employees. They earn less, but they enjoy their jobs more, they said. And, in the 2½ years they have been operating, the couple said, they've grown to about 300 clients and about \$1 million a year in sales. They hope within the next five to 10 years to have 10 times the annual sales, and move into an office and hire eight to 12 employees.

"The cool things about being an entrepreneur are that we get to grow our business," Jim Welsh said. "Every day we work, we're growing our business and we get to build it the way we want."

In a conversation edited for clarity and brevity, the couple talked about their business;

travel agencies in the age of the Internet and, now, a government crackdown on immigration; and what it takes to be entrepreneurs.

Q: Talk about your business.

Julie: We both built decade-long careers and accrued this great business knowledge and had some serious conversations about what our own company would be like if we took that leap. We came up with three criteria: We wanted to make sure we had knowledge of the industry we were going into. We wanted to make sure there was an opportunity or niche we could fill, and we really wanted to wake up every day and enjoy what we did. We were fortunate enough to have traveled a lot in our lives, separately and together. We discovered through the surge of online travel agencies and do-it-yourself travel agents that there was a niche for more concierge services in travel.

Q: So what does your company actually do?

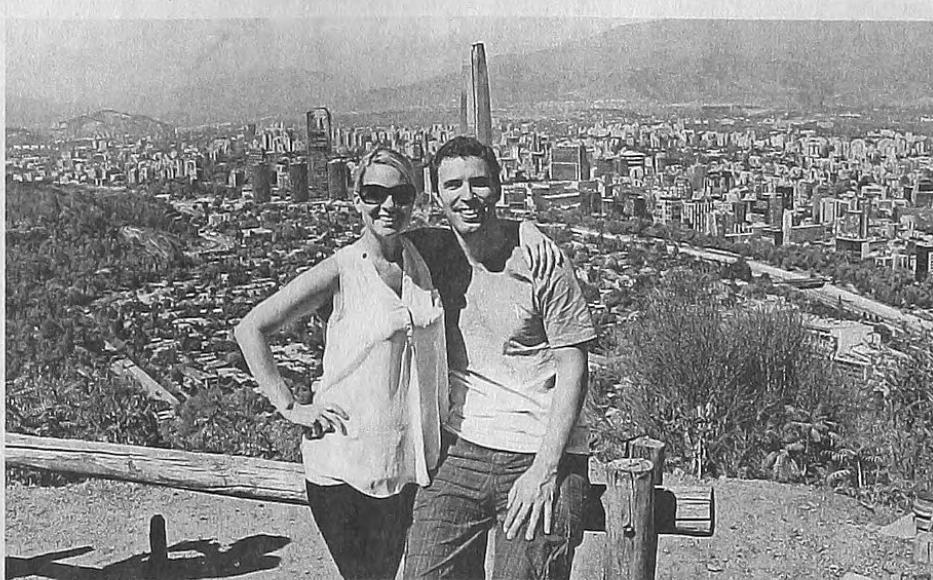
Julie: (Laughter) I would call it a relationship business. That's because we focus on getting to know our clients, their personalities, their styles and what's going to appeal to them. And on the other side of the coin, we focus on our relationship with our industry connections and getting to know their products, services and locations.

Q: But, isn't that just what a travel agency is supposed to do?

Julie: I agree. That's what a travel agency should be. But, what we were finding is if you are doing travel yourself, the online information is not only overwhelming, but extremely subjective. It's a risk. We really try to personalize and customize.

Q: What is the profile of your customer?

Julie: In general, we serve executives. We serve families. It's the type of people who crave the concierge service we can provide, and also the expertise we can provide. They want someone to handle the details for them because, frankly, they want the peace of mind the trip is going to be taken care of. They get to save the time and effort of going through the information themselves.



Husband and wife entrepreneurs Julie and Jim Welsh own Amaze Travel.

MICHELE FINO

No two trips are alike.

Q: How did you go from working for firms to opening your own travel agency?

Julie: We've been fortunate to travel a lot in our lives and we saw how the travel agents would work with us — or with our families — to set up trips, so that's what gave us an indication to see what was possible in this space. Inspired by that, we saw there was this opportunity to provide this service.

Q: There wasn't a eureka moment?

Julie: No. It wasn't overnight. But, it's kind of the dream. We had these great finance careers and that gave us all the confidence in the world that we could run a business. It's like that question: If you could win the lottery, what would you do? It's hard, until you are in that situation and you try to define your passion, you don't think about it.

Q: So who is ahead on the country count?

Julie: I think I'm around 26? 23? I don't know.

Julie: I think Julie is at 23, and I'm at 26 or 27.

Q: Do you keep score?

Julie: It's hard for either one of us to get ahead now because we travel so much together. But we do sometimes travel separately.

Q: What qualifies someone to be a luxury travel expert?

Julie: It's not regulated like the CPA or bar exam. Anybody can technically call themselves a travel adviser. I did go through a certification process because in my finance world, I'm used to having credentials after my name. But, in reality what makes you a luxury travel expert is your first-hand experience, and your relationships on the ground. And also having that high-touch sense of service.

Q: How much did you invest to start your business?

Julie: Not much.
Jim: We are all self-

financed. The start-up costs are not tremendously high. I would estimate them to be \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Q: What is the future of travel?

Julie: It's all about service, the generations, especially that are coming up, they want personal experiences. People want to experience places that are local. They want to spend a month there, not a four-day weekend. So, what they want to do is to go, and feel like they have actually experienced the place, not just checked

off the major sites and taken their photos.

Q: Do you have any sense that this new immigration situation from the president's executive orders will affect your business?

Julie: It's a great question and we stay on top of current events, whatever the issues of the day are. We have partners throughout the world we can reach out to. It's probably too early to tell. There is a lot of wait-and-see.

Q: What advice do you have for other entrepreneurs?

Julie: The hardest work, the most effort you should put in is when you are developing your business profile. That is the time to do your due diligence. Once you have that set, that is your guiding light. As soon as you open the doors, people are going to want to give you advice, and you are going to want to follow it, and you are going to want to try everything. But, you need to ask yourself, "Does this follow my initial profile and vision?" If it doesn't, then you are working against yourself.

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ELLIS

PATRICIA ANNE Age 76, of Troy, Michigan, passed away on February 8th, 2017 from pneumonia after a six month battle with brain cancer.

Patricia was born on August 29th, 1940, the daughter of Justin and Inga Cullen. She graduated from Troy High School, then went on to receive a Bachelor's Degree in English from Wayne State University. Patricia is survived by her two daughters—Jill (Sean) Durocher of Sterling Heights and Robyn (Jacob) Brandenburg of Berkley, her sister Alice (David) Case of Troy, her nephew Daniel (Sandy) Case of Rochester, her niece Sarah Case of Livonia, her grandchildren Abraham and Otto Brandenburg, and her great-niece Madison Case. A memorial service will be held in the spring at her home to celebrate her life. Patricia had retired from her career in Medical Transcription. She was a devoted grandmother and an avid crossword puzzle fan. Patricia was preceded in death by both of her parents—Justin and Inga Cullen, and her brother Michael Cullen.

GONZALEZ



RAFAEL MANUEL, MD January 2, 2017, Age 85. Former resident of Birmingham, MI and longtime child psychiatrist practicing in metro Detroit. Devoted husband of the late Joan (nee O'Neill) and Elizabeth (nee Mollicone). Proud father of Ellen Potter (Ross), Mary Scher (Adam), Rafael Jr. (Janet), Maria Olson (David), Juan Carlos (Julia), Alex (Jenny), and stepfather of Eric Stillman. Devoted grandfather to Matthew, Kaitlin, Maria, Robert, Maxwell, Claire, and Emily. Brother of Juan Manuel and the late Olga Margarita. Dear Uncle to an extended family of nephews and nieces. Memorial Mass Saturday, May 6, 2017 at 12 Noon at Holy Name Catholic Church, 630 Harmon St., Birmingham, MI. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Boys Republic "Dr. Rafael Gonzalez Scholarship Fund" in Chino, California or the "Dr. G Memorial Educational Scholarship Fund" at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Detroit, Michigan or www.svsfcenter.org. A.J. Desmond & Sons, 248-362-2500.

View obituary and share memories at
AJDesmond.com

SEREY

CHARLES EUGENE Age 92, February 21, 2017. Beloved husband of Dorothy for 66 years. Loving father of Greg (Barbara), Becky (Tom) Bertha, Joel and Mary Beth (Don) Johnson. Dear grandfather of Andy, Ryan (Lauren), Jessica (Matt), Kristin (Kevin), Jeremy, Alexa, Cole and Evan. Great grandfather of Mya, Luke, Abby, Melody and Ione. A Funeral Service was held at the R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Home, 31551 Ford Rd., Garden City, Saturday, February 25, 2017, at 11 a.m. A visitation was held on Friday from 3 - 8 p.m. Memorial contributions may be directed to D.A.V. Please share a memory of Charles at www.rgharris.com.

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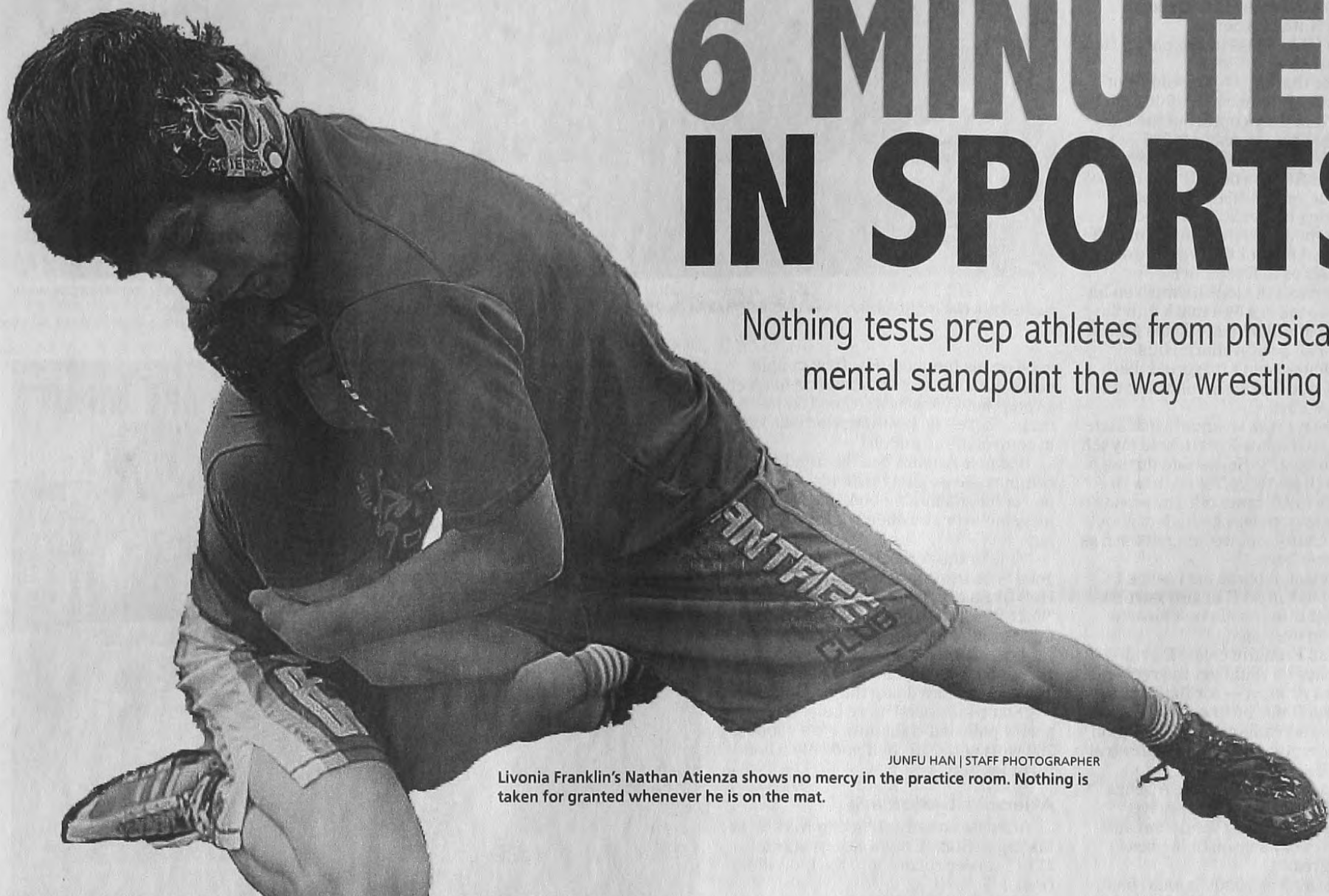
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PREP WRESTLING

TOUGHEST 6 MINUTES IN SPORTS

Nothing tests prep athletes from physical and mental standpoint the way wrestling does



JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Livonia Franklin's Nathan Atienza shows no mercy in the practice room. Nothing is taken for granted whenever he is on the mat.



BILL BRESLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Canton High School alum Alec Pantaleo (left), shown during a 2016 Team USA practice gearing up for the an international tournament, echoes others who consider wrestling to be the toughest grind for any prep athlete.

Tim Smith
hometownlife.com

Marine boot camps have nothing on high school wrestling. Take it from Livonia Franklin's David Chiola, a guy who has wrestled and coached the sport most of his life. Six minutes on the mat during a match prove beyond a doubt that wrestling is the toughest challenge — both mentally and physically — for high school athletes to contend with. "There is nothing tougher to do in high school," said Chiola, who wrestled at now-closed Redford Bishop Borgess and is a longtime coach with the Patriots. "And I challenge anyone to think something is tougher. Anyone that thinks other sports are, all you have to do is find someone who does both sports and ask them. "I don't care if it's football, lacrosse, swimming. There's nothing tougher."

Can't cut it

With a knowing nod, Chiola bottom-lined it about just *how* tough it is.

"I've had more than a dozen kids that have gone off to Marine boot camp come back and say wrestling was tougher," Chiola said. "And that's coming from guys that are adults now."

Football players might think they can handle joining the wrestling team. But then they find out practice begins with a two-mile run and opt out.

"The funny thing is, we start our practice running two miles," Chiola said. "And I have so many kids that go, 'I could never wrestle, you guys run two miles.' I'm like, that's the easiest thing we do the entire practice. The *entire* practice ... and we have kids that won't join because of it."

They are doing all that "on maybe a granola bar and a sandwich. They didn't get to eat a full breakfast or full dinner."

Don't forget actual wrestling, followed by agonizing sprints.

"Even if you were going to make everything even (with other sports), like our 2½-hour practice, these guys will go home tonight, weigh their food,

See **WRESTLING**, Page B3

Rockets' Mars shoots for the stars

His deception, cool exterior make it tough for opponents

Tim Smith
hometownlife.com

When Mikey Mars gets on the mat for Westland John Glenn, he's cool on the outside, but fiercely competitive on the inside.

The trick is not overdoing any move in his wrestling tool box or giving opponents too much of a peek.

"I'm probably a defensive wrestler right now, but I'm trying to work toward being more of an aggressive wrestler," said Mars, who has racked up 31 wins in a row to improve to 53-2 on the season entering the Division 1 individual state finals March 2-4 at The Palace of Auburn Hills. "I like sitting back waiting

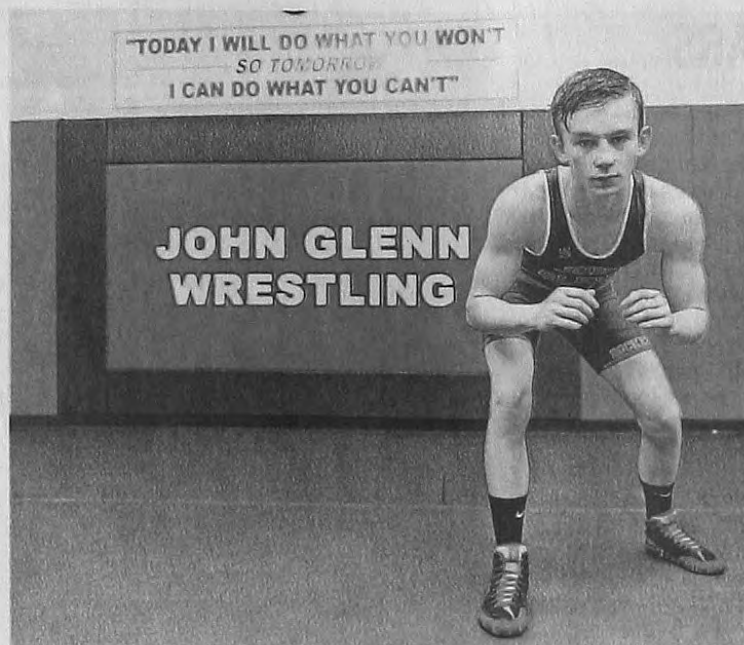
ON TO THE FINALS

What: 2017 MHSAA Individual Wrestling State Championships
When: March 2-4
Where: The Palace of Auburn Hills
Tickets: \$11 per session GA; \$12 per session reserved; \$55 all-sessions (all prices include parking)

for them to make their move and I react to that. It's just how I've always wrestled and I've gotten really good at it.

"I wouldn't recommend this style of wrestling, I'd rather be aggressive, but it works for me."

See **MARS**, Page B2



John Glenn's Mikey Mars displays his stance, which opponents will see at the state finals.

JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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PREP WRESTLING

Patriots' Atienza always a step ahead

With eye on another championship, Franklin senior tirelessly works to add to arsenal

Tim Smith
HometownLife.com

Not every high school wrestler has a move named after him but, then again, there aren't too many like Livonia Franklin's Nathan Atienza.

He is affable. He is unflappable. He is unstoppable.

Consider that the 17-year-old went undefeated as a junior in 2015-16, going 57-0 and ultimately capturing the individual state championship at 145 pounds.

What has Atienza done for an encore in his senior year with the Patriots? After moving up the ladder to the 152-pound weight class he *did* lose a match — in the final bout of the Wayne County Championships in December.

That remains the lone blemish on his record as he takes a 54-1 mark into the Division 1 individual state finals March 2-4 at The Palace of Auburn Hills.

And Atienza hasn't forgotten that loss or the sick feeling in his stomach that came with it.

"Last year, I was an undefeated state champion, so I know I got to hold myself to that standard," Atienza said during a recent practice. "It definitely lit a fire underneath me. I came into the season a little more lazy, more nonchalant about it all. Just comfy, not working as hard as I should have been.

"After I lost, it made me realize I needed to push myself again, start doing the right things so I don't have to feel like that ever again."

Longtime Franklin coach David Chiola wishes he could get the recipe to what drives Atienza — for that, matter any Atienza. Older brother Jordan Atienza was a Franklin state champion who now is enjoying success at Central Michigan University.

Chiola could then take the Atienza mix of physical talent, inner drive, work ethic and disdain for defeat and serve it up every season to the next batch of Patriots.

"I don't think anybody in this room, possibly including me, knows what he does in the off-season," Chiola said. "He basically makes it a 12-month-a-year sport. He goes to tournaments all over the country, he trains with different people, different places with different coaches. And once the match starts, he's total confidence. He's in control of a match from start to finish. He just knows what he's going to do.

"And he's got such a wide variety of moves that the opponent can never scout him."

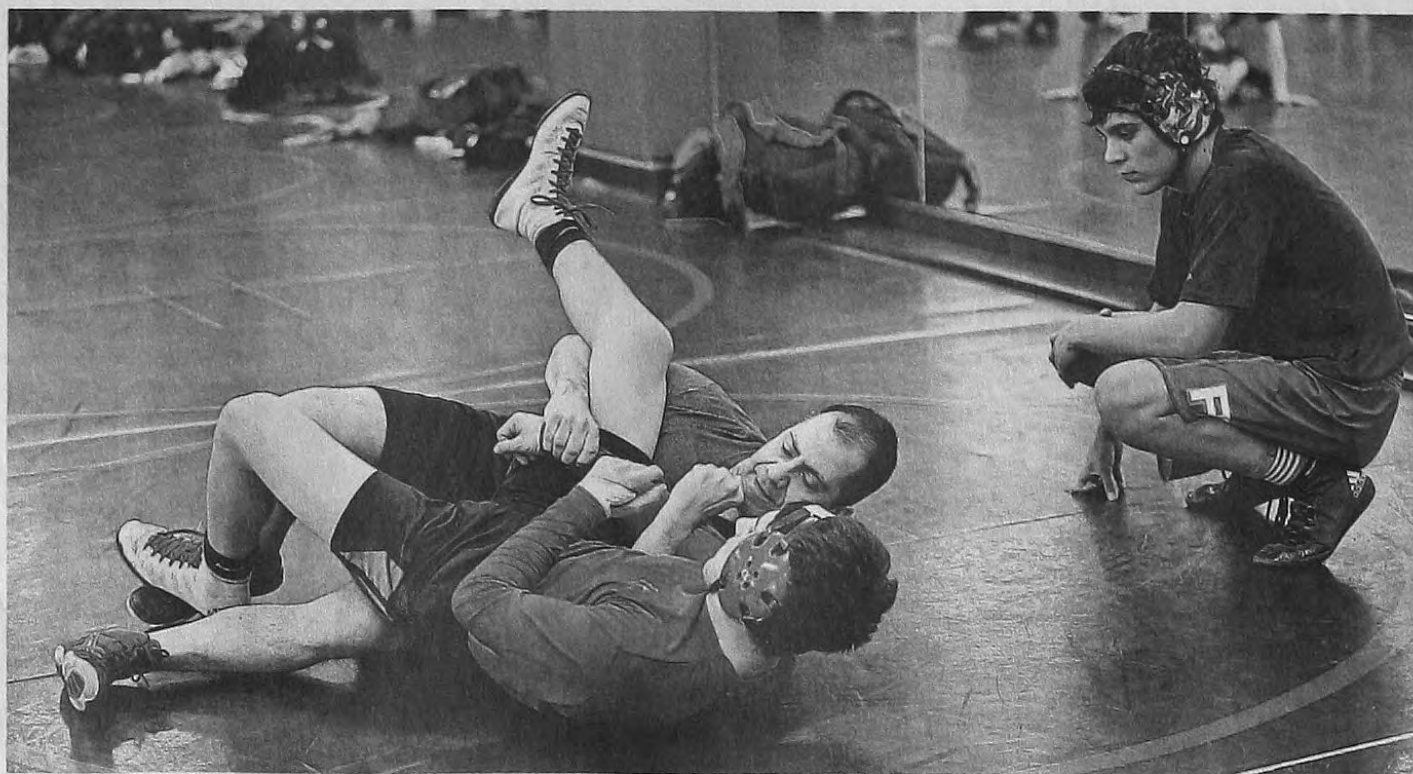
Always in control

Chiola said other wrestler's might have a go-to move, such as the "fireman carry" take-down.

So the game plan when going up against such an opponent is clear — avoid getting into a situation where that move comes into play.

"Don't get fireman and you'll be good," Chiola said about that scenario. "But (with Atienza), there's no way you can scout against him, he's got so many moves he can hit.

"And he's so good on the mat, you've got all-state wrestlers that are afraid to go on the mat with him and go down. They'll stay on their feet, but he's really



Nathan Atienza (right) observes as Livonia Franklin coach David Chiola gives a demonstration to sophomore Marino DiPonio. JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

good on his feet now. His first couple years, he wasn't as dominant on his feet as he is now. Now he's so good on his feet ... there's no position where he's not in control of the match."

Because Atienza has the mind of a computer to go along with his strong, powerful and nimble body, he is thinking a move or two ahead of the other guy.

"One of the reason's Nathan is so good is he uses his mind the entire time. He's like a coach out there," Chiola said. "Fact is, when we sit in his corner, we don't coach him as much as just watch for little things to help him or look for rule violations to point out to the ref. He knows what he's doing the whole time.

"Some kids need more help. He's pretty polished right now. He's got over 200 wins under his belt and only a handful of losses."

Atienza's trademark

Atienza, already signed to wrestle at Michigan State University, brings a 215-15 career record into the individual finals.

Of course, the X-factor in Atienza matches might be something they call "The Nathan" around Franklin.

"He knows enough moves and he's good at showing them," Chiola said. "Nathan, he has a couple moves we actually named after him because he hits them so often.

"One is just called 'The Nathan,' where he does that wing-half, where it's just so tight. He's pinned kids at the state tournament with it. We just called it after him. When we're showing it, he shows it. We don't show it, because he knows it better than us."

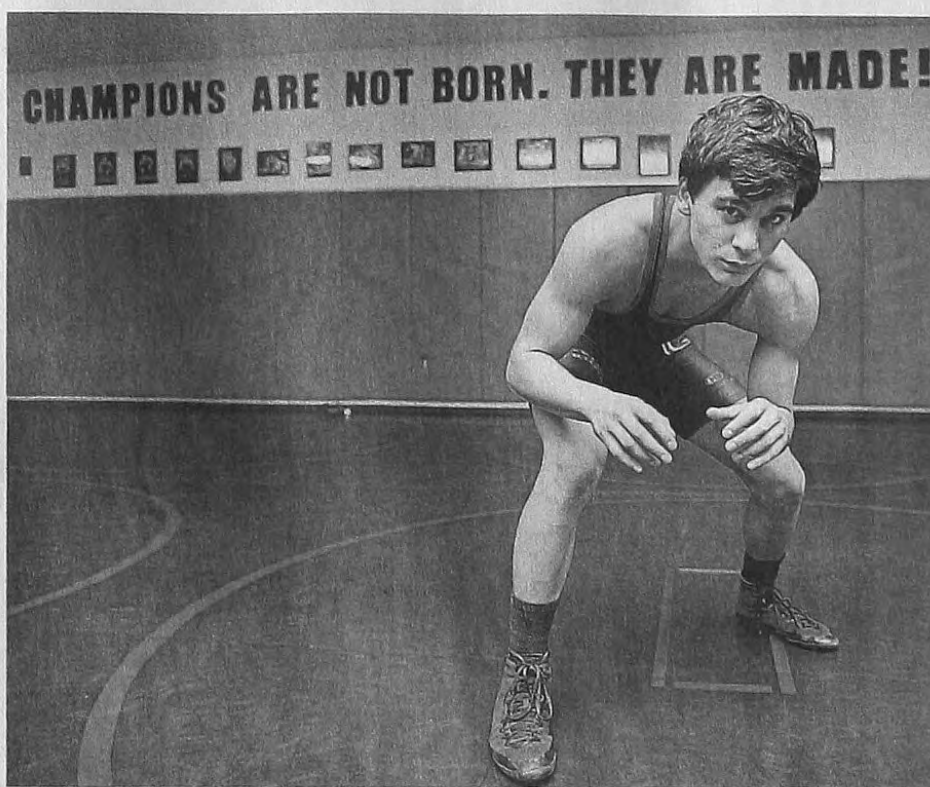
Atienza chuckled when asked about that move.

"It's a chicken wing. You get a chicken wing on one side and usually you jump over to the other side and you put in a half," he said. "Whichever side he starts leaning against, then you jump to the other side and pin with it.

"It's a top-wrestling move. It's my favorite move on top and (I'm) kind of notorious for it. I hit it on just about anybody."

Brother act

Chances are, he learned the move from his wrestling family, maybe from



Livonia Franklin senior wrestler Nathan Atienza is going for a second straight individual title. JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jordan (a 2014 Franklin graduate who went 223-19 in his prep career) or his dad, Armand Atienza.

According to Atienza, the day he walked into the Franklin wrestling room as a ninth-grader, he knew he had a family tradition to follow. All he had to do was look around the room for a reminder, because Jordan was a senior that year.

"I knew I had a lot of people looking at me when I was coming in here," Atienza said. "So it helped me focus myself and made me realize I needed to do the right things and work hard, all these other things so I could uphold my family name and make a name for myself."

Chiola, meanwhile, said it has been an honor to coach both of the Atienza brothers. Yet both brought distinct personalities and leadership approaches to the team.

"That's who he looked up to the most and probably still does," Chiola said.

"And Jordan even comes in sometimes. When he's home (from CMU), we'll have him run a practice. You can see the same admiration when he goes up to him.

"They were both captains; they were different kinds of captains. Jordan was more of a dictator and didn't care if anybody liked him. Nathan likes to be friends with the guys, so he doesn't bark out the orders as much. They're different in that respect, but they're both good captains in their own way."

Nathan Atienza makes sure to tell his teammates to train, sharpen all aspects of their game, get as fit and confident as possible — and try to have some fun while they're at it.

That's sometimes not an easy pitch to make.

And he has the most fun standing on the top step of The Palace podium.

tsmith@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @TimSmith_Sports

MARS

Continued from Page B1

Yes, it does. After winning state titles in 2015 at 103 pounds and last year at 112, Mars is setting his sights on getting to the top of The Palace podium in the 119-pound weight class.

At the Saline-hosted D1 individual regional, Mars ensured his third trip to the finals with a hard-fought pin in 5:14 against Ann Arbor Pioneer's Rayvon Foley, who entered the regional championship match-up with just two losses in 52 bouts.

No worries

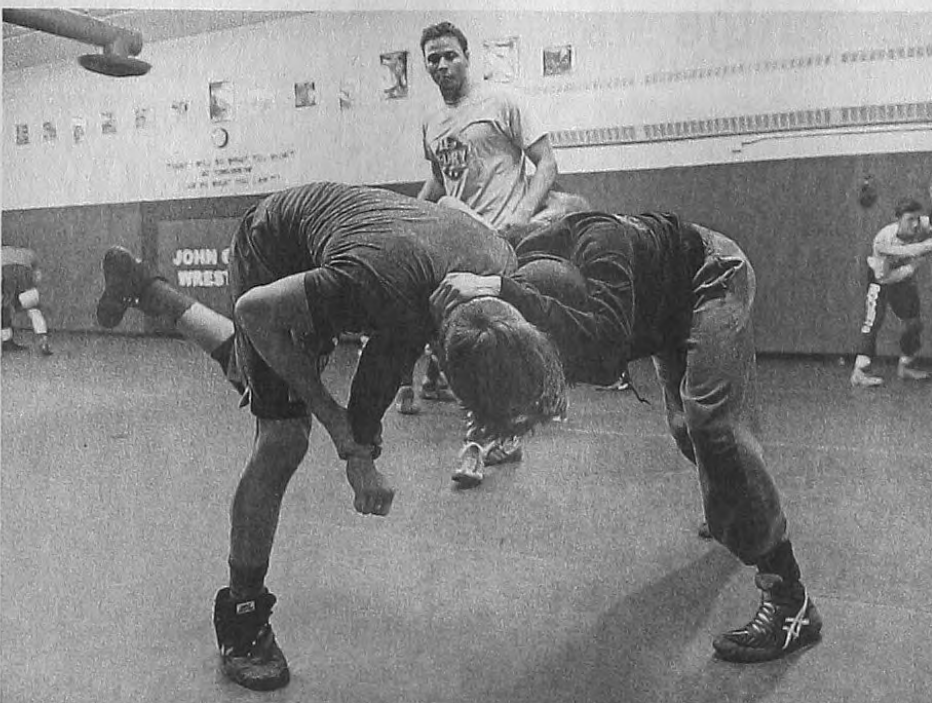
"He's an easy kid to coach," John Glenn coach Bill Polk said about Mars. "He works hard, he does a lot in the off-season. You don't have to ride him about doing what he's supposed to be doing to become a good wrestler because he knows all that.

"He's very self-motivated, he never misses practice. There's some things every wrestler has to work on. There's some things that we're working on with Mike that he's being a little stubborn about — which, that's just wrestling. Everybody's got to overcome some things. Nobody's perfect.

"But as far as (that), I wish I could clone him. You can't ask for a kid to work harder, take it serious and be motivated, be there every day and be a leader in almost every fashion."

Mars also is enough of a student of the sport to know he might need to tweak some parts of his approach. He already is a 10-year wrestling veteran, having begun at a young age with the John Glenn Bottle Rockets youth program.

"I want to change as an individual,



Cranking up the intensity during a John Glenn practice are Mikey Mars (right) and Isaac Lefler. JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

because I know I need to be more aggressive on my feet if I really want to win and keep winning," Mars said earlier in the season.

Imagine what opponents might think if a wrestler with two state championships under his belt and another season left with the Rockets employs new moves or cranks up his level of aggressiveness.

Yet Polk knows it's tougher to hit a moving target. So he suggests to Mars that he add to his arsenal.

"I would never try to change his style in a lot of ways, because he wins, obviously," Polk said. "He's a two-time

state champ. But with that, there's a target on your head and people are starting to close the gap.

"So he's got to keep changing and keep evolving as a wrestler and the way he's going to do that is offensively. If he keeps adding, he's going to keep winning state titles."

Always on go

Meanwhile, Mars said his year-long training regimen is only part of the equation when it comes to success.

Being part of a strong high school team with other championship contenders is invaluable, for the peer pressure

PALACE-BOUND

OTHER AREA QUALIFIERS: Russ Rusnell (Franklin, 103); Kyle Borthwell (John Glenn, 112); Mikey Mars (John Glenn, 119); Isaac Lefler (John Glenn, 125); Christian Zimmerman (Luth. West., 125); Nick Daniels (Wayne, 130); Joseph Sanchez (C'ville, 130); Larry Elliott (RU, 130); Anthony Gibson (John Glenn, 135); Tarik Alcodray (Stevenson, 140); Andy Faith (Luth. West., 140); John Siemasz (John Glenn, 145); Kenny Vadnais (RU, 145); Nathan Atienza (Franklin, 152); Bruce Haslitt (Salem, 152); David Means (C'ville, 171); Lionel Cornish (John Glenn, 189); JaWuan Peete (John Glenn, 215); Emmanuel Willie (Franklin, 215); Nick Glinn (Luth. West., 215); Brandon Carreathers (John Glenn, 285); Anthony Calloway (Wayne, 285).

alone.

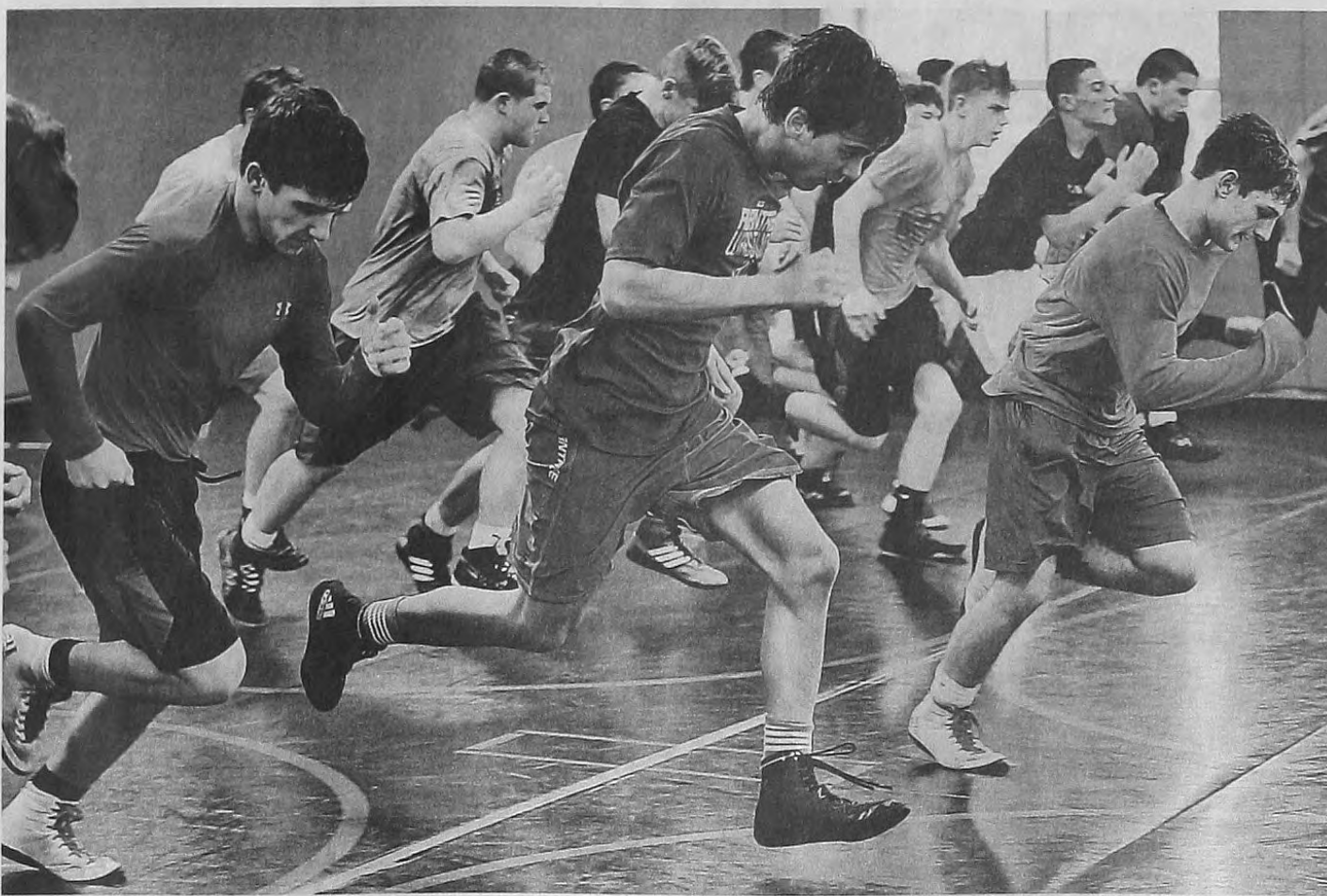
"It definitely helps. Everybody's working as hard as they can," Mars said. "We push, everyone wants to be the best on the team. If we do sprints, everybody wants to be No. 1, so we all push each other."

Team camaraderie also is something that has made Mars continue to grow as a wrestler and as a person as his brilliant career keeps evolving.

"It definitely helps that we push each other and, every day we know we can rely on each other," said Mars, who will have seven John Glenn teammates traveling to The Palace with him — including individual regional champions JaWuan Peete (215) and Anthony Gibson (135).

Chances are, some of Mars' attitude has been rubbing off on them. All he cares about is wrestling and winning and he doesn't worry about things he can't control.

tsmith@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @TimSmith_Sports



JUNFU HAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

High school wrestlers find out there's much more to the sport than they might have envisioned. Here, Livonia Franklin's Nathan Atienza leads teammates during practice sprints.

WRESTLING

Continued from Page B1

go out and run extra to lose whatever they ate," Chiola said. "The whole weight-cutting thing, they'll come to my room tomorrow morning to check their weight.

"So it's a 24-hour thing. You can't wake up in the middle of the night and say, 'Hey, I'm thirsty, I think I'll have a glass of water.' No, you can't have a glass of water. You already had your water allotment for the day. It's a lot of mental toughness."

The assertion that nothing tops the six minutes of a wrestling match in athletic difficulty is argued somewhat by Salem senior all-state distance swimmer Phillip Collingwood.

"Full respect to wrestlers, because they are able to take physical punishment, give it out, outsmart your opponent," said Collingwood, one of the area's top 500-yard freestylers. "I think that's where swimming has that different aspect. Which is, there's no way to outstrategize.

"Whoever works the hardest, whoever hurts the most, wins in swimming. In wrestling, you could know a better technique or have a better move or be able to execute something."

Ultimate grind

Of course, there is the physical battle each prep wrestler faces in every practice, as well as under the spotlight in matches — which for elite-level wrestlers such as Franklin senior Nathan Atienza and Westland John Glenn junior Mikey Mars, will escalate until the Division 1 individual state finals March 2-4 at The Palace of Auburn Hills.

"It's the hardest six minutes out there," said Atienza, who went undefeated in 2015-16 and entered individual regionals with just one loss this season. "It's just you out there against your opponent and you're pushing yourselves to the absolute limit.

"There's no breaks, just two kids, two warriors really, just going at it for six minutes as hard as they can, trying to better themselves and try to be better than the other kid."

Mars, a two-time individual champion for the Rockets, said being mentally strong is the key ingredient to wrestling success.

"Mental toughness, just being strong-minded and iron-willed, that's the most important thing," Mars said. "Because then you can always push yourself past your breaking point."

Former Canton all-stater and University of Michigan wrestler Alec Pantaleo described wrestling as a "discipline" more than a sport.

"The thing with wrestling, you can look at basketball, you can look at football," Pantaleo said. "It's like, when you're not playing well, when you're doing as great as you should be, you can be pulled off to the side and put on the bench and catch your breath.

"With wrestling, it's complete opposite. You have to get stronger as the match goes on. As you start diving into the hard work and real nitty-gritty of it, you have to keep pushing forward.

"That's why I look at wrestling as more of a discipline than a sport. It really is you against yourself out there. It's hard to keep pushing through when you don't want to. And you can't say the same thing about the sports where you can rely on other people to help you win."

It takes sacrifice

Although returning to The Palace podium obviously drives wrestlers such as Atienza and Mars — Pantaleo also enjoyed that thrill during his career with the Chiefs — the daily grind away from cheering crowds is something that can separate the wheat from the chaff.

It is tough and can be lonely. But supreme sacrifice is needed in order to get through up to three, two-minute periods — even more if there is overtime.

No one wants the embarrassment of

"There's no breaks, just two kids, two warriors really, just going at it for six minutes as hard as they can, trying to better themselves and try to be better than the other kid."

NATHAN ATIENZA

Livonia Franklin wrestler

being in control for 5:59 only to let victory slip away in the final second. After all, there might be hell to pay at the next day's practice.

"You got to go for the whole six minutes," Franklin's Chiola said. "And I've seen that, too. We condition for that third period. I get really mad at my kids that get pinned in the first or the second. I'm like, 'You just threw all your conditioning out the window.'

"You're training for that third period. Right now (in practice), they're doing a thing where one guy stays in for five minutes. And you'll notice, that at the end of the five minutes, the guy is much easier to take down.

"That's the whole premise in a meet, get a kid to that fifth minute, sixth minute and he's a much different wrestler. Everybody's good for a minute or two."

'A lot of sacrifice'

John Glenn head coach Bill Polk concurred that being able to compete on the mat — and have any kind of success — is about individual dedication and sacrifice. Not even football two-a-days can measure up to wrestling in those areas.

"I believe it is within one's self," said Polk, another former prep wrestler. "This sport takes a lot of sacrifice in every aspect. Opponents are roadblocks. If you prepare more and have confidence from your preparation, usually you will prevail.

"Wrestling six minutes can seem to last a tremendous amount of time longer if you have not prepared correctly."

Polk did tip his cap to what athletes in other sports do endure, however.

"I do feel all sports have a special part of its make-up that makes them all tough," Polk said. "But I do feel wrestling is the toughest. Wrestling has everything. You need conditioning, discipline, pressure, smarts and the ability to perform as a team and an individual at the same time.

"When you are on the mat, the spotlight is on you, no one else. You have to be able to use nervous energy in a positive manner."

Veteran Farmington coach Al Beyar said the six minutes of a high school wrestling match test an athlete like no other competition can. One reason is the way the sport is structured, with three, two-minute periods with virtually no time to recharge.

"It just takes a unique individual to be that tough to go six minutes," Beyar said. "You don't really get any rest time between periods. You get just enough time to get set and go again.

"And if there's any type of bleeding, you stop just long enough to get it fixed. You don't have time to get a drink. You can't call a timeout. Yeah, I think you can call it the toughest six minutes in high school sports. Easily."

Beyar agreed with Pantaleo that wrestlers are pretty much out on an island, with nobody else to blame or pass the baton to if things go south.

"In football, a team has 11 players. You can always say someone didn't do their job," Beyar said. "Like, we didn't score a touchdown because someone didn't block or I missed the tackle because somebody else didn't do what they were supposed to.

"But in wrestling, you're out there by yourself. There's no one else to put the blame on. But the good part is you can get all the accolades, because you did it all yourself."

Tougher than ever

Salem head coach Jeremy Henderson also knows from personal experience

what wrestling can do to a high school athlete's physical and mental well-being. He earned an individual championship for the Rocks in 2006 and now is working to bring his old high school back to prominence.

"Even when you win, it hurts, but you know deep down that every inch of you was put into that match and you would die to get your hand raised," Henderson said. "It is the most humble sport. You have to shake the hand of an opponent that just manhandled you on the mat and (you) might have to face him again in a week.

"It is a grind every day in practice and your body is pushed to the limit, even when you don't want it to be since there are others that are coming after you on your own team every day. Six minutes on a mat feels like an hour."

According to Chiola, there is another reason why high school wrestlers have to buckle up for a long, hard, strenuous ride if that is the sport they pursue.

Everybody is working just as hard, at year-long camps, clinics and in open wrestling rooms where rivals during the season test each other to the max.

Chiola smiles when he thinks back to how prep wrestling was back when he was at Borgess in the late 1970s. He's witnessed a lot of change from the sidelines, too, since he is in his 37th year as a high school coach.

"Kids are starting at a really young age," Chiola said. "You had a few kids do that back then. But now, you have more freshmen at the state meet in one weight class than you did in the entire state meet back when I wrestled.

"They're starting younger and they're coming into ninth grade more polished. Kids are doing a lot more open mats and clinics, so they know each other."

The presence of social media is another example of what wrestlers in 2017 experience.

"You get more matches online, rankings online, you get more egos involved," Chiola said.

Prepares for life

Yet if more kids tap into tweets and other tidbits of information for inspiration or motivation, they don't mind delving into Dan Gable's unwritten "bible" of the sport as fashioned over decades of dominance as a wrestler and coach.

Pantaleo, who in 2016 competed for the United States Junior Olympics wrestling team in Italy, could not hold back on his praise of Gable — who was an All-America wrestler who went on to coach the University of Iowa to 15 NCAA championships.

"There's a quote, Dan Gable said it," Pantaleo said. "He said, 'The first period is won by the fastest wrestler, the second period is won by the most technical wrestler and the third period is won by the wrestler with the most heart.'"

Even more to the point, Polk quoted Gable as saying: "Once you have wrestled, everything else is easy."

And those who have stuck with the sport despite all the gut-wrenching workouts, constant weight checks and inner and outer turmoil of all kinds will tell you they would do it all over again.

As far as Pantaleo is concerned, he's glad that wrestling is so tough, because it prepares athletes for life's subsequent challenges.

"With wrestling, it does weed out and it does make people stronger," Pantaleo said. "It shows a lot of character. You can tell someone who breaks under pressure and can't handle a lot of pressure being put on them on the wrestling mat. That's very visible to see.

"And even though wrestling is only a small part of your life, I know it's going to help me carry on. My job later in life is going to all be about pressure being put on me. Thankfully for me, I'll know I'll be able to cope with that stress and be able to push through it."

Gable would be proud to hear that.

tsmith@hometownlife.com
Twitter: @TimSmith_Sports

PREP BASKETBALL

Plymouth wins with all-around game

Salem wins; Warriors' Burk sets new season scoring mark

Tim Smith
Hometownlife.com

The districts begin in just over a week, but Plymouth's varsity boys basketball team already swung into playoff mode with Friday night's spirited 65-52 win over Pinckney.

Plymouth (8-11) had several key contributors, all helping the team overcome the absence of junior Anthony Crump (illness).

Leading the way with 22 points and 17 rebounds was Tariq Woody, while Joey Robb also had a big game (18 points, eight boards).

Other Wildcats to chip in included Connor Bush (eight points), Troy Aikens (seven points) and Justin Reynolds (five points).

For Pinckney (10-8), Connor Chynoweth and Kolton Pavlicek tallied 13 and 12 points, respectively.

"Fantastic effort from our young men tonight," Plymouth head coach Mike Soukup said. "Very good team effort. Energy was good for most of the night. It was our best defensive effort of the season."

SALEM 67, MILFORD 65: The Rocks earned a hard-fought win over Milford in the KLAA boys basketball tournament.

Spearheading the win was senior Cameron Grace, who registered 17 points. Chipping in with 14 points each were seniors Camren Barden and Kyle Winfrey.

Salem (8-11) will close out the regular season Thursday at Waterford Mott.

Girls basketball

FRANKLIN ROAD 39, PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN 22: Daria Bobec's 17 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks proved to be the difference Friday as host Novi Franklin Road Christian (16-4, 6-2) rolled to a Michigan Independent Athletic Conference Blue Division win over Plymouth Christian (10-10, 3-5).

Senior guard Danielle Fusco added eight points for the victorious Warriors, who jumped out to a 17-2 first quarter advantage and never looked back. Franklin Road made 4-of-6 free throws.

Robin Albert scored six points for the Eagles, who went 6-of-10 from the foul line.

MILFORD 43, SALEM 36: On Thursday, senior guard Mallory Barrett finished with 17 points, 11 rebounds, six steals and three assists as the Mavericks (7-13) downed the host Rocks (5-15) in a KLAA consolation bracket game.

Sophomore forward Allison Smith tallied all seven of her points in the second period as the teams were deadlocked at 20-all at halftime.

Barrett then scored eight of her 17 in the third quarter as Milford outscored Salem, 14-8, to build a 34-28 advantage.

Senior guard Darby Scott paced Salem with nine points.

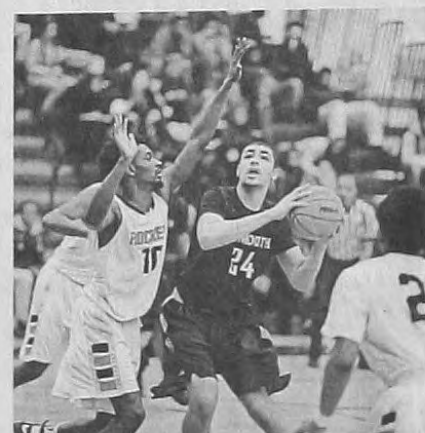
BRIGHTON 44, CANTON 41: Julianna Pietila's 14-point effort lifted Brighton to this KLAA tournament win over Canton on Thursday.

The Chiefs, led by Erin Hult (11 points) and Ashley Criscenti (eight points), only shot 28 percent from the floor.

"The ball needed to find the bottom of the net a couple more times if we were going to come away with a win," Canton coach Rob Heitmeier said.

WLW 38, PLYMOUTH 29: In the regular season finale Thursday, Plymouth (9-11) fell short despite 14 points and 12 rebounds from Chantal LeDoux. Elle McCaslin and Becca Przybylo each scored five while Sydney McCaig added four.

"Every possession matters in games like this," Plymouth coach Ryan Ballard said. "We either missed a key layup or made a silly foul. You can't do this against well-coached teams."



TOM BEAUDOIN

Tariq Woody (24), shown from earlier this season, scored 22 points Friday for Plymouth against Pinckney.

BOYS HOCKEY

State tournament encore: Rocks, 'Cats to meet again

Salem and Plymouth face each other for fifth straight postseason

Tim Smith

hometownlife.com

When they drop the puck to start the 2017 boys hockey state tournament Monday at Plymouth Cultural Center, the two teams facing each other will be very much accustomed to the scenario.

That's because it will be the fifth consecutive match-up of Salem and Plymouth in the postseason.

This time around, the Rocks and Wildcats will be engaged in a Division 2 pre-regional tilt (7 p.m.) and Salem head coach Ryan Ossenmacher doesn't expect things will be any different than in the previous four tourney meetings (each team has won twice).

"It's been that way now for the fifth year in a row that we've played each other," Ossenmacher said during Salem's practice Thursday afternoon. "I think of those four, two went to overtime, two went to double overtime. Might as well just play the game right now, start it in double overtime and see who wins."

"They're a tough team to play against. They work hard, they don't give away pucks. It's been their brand of hockey for the last few years. We know we've got a battle and that, if we don't play well, they're going to win."

Agreeing wholeheartedly is Plymouth head coach Gerry Vento.

"Opening up against Salem to start the playoffs is a tough task," Vento said. "They have been playing as well as anyone down the stretch and no doubt we are going to have our hands full."

"Playoff success in hockey at any level comes down to the same things, playing disciplined, winning the special teams and getting timely goaltending."

"The team that does those things the best usually does well in the playoffs. We are excited to get things going and to see what happens."

Ramping it up

The Rocks (13-9-2) and Wildcats (14-10-1) both are state-ranked and battle-tested, having faced a string of tough KLAAs and non-conference opponents since the holidays to get ready.

"It's something we pride ourselves on every year is being a second-half team," Ossenmacher said. "And this year is no exception. I think this year we're a week or two later than normal, but we seem to have found it."

"We're playing our best hockey right now, but I still think, and I think these guys agree, there's still a little bit more in the tank for us to find."

Meanwhile, the Rocks don't want to get too far in front of themselves. The team still has Saturday's regular season finale against Berkley at Hazel Park.

"We really try to go one game at a time, because if you get caught looking ahead, that's the moment you never get to," Ossenmacher said. "So for us, our focus right now isn't even on Plymouth. Our focus is on Saturday's game."

The winner of Monday's pre-regional will advance to face Canton at 7 p.m.



Plymouth's Alex Chartrand (front) battles for the puck with Salem's Shawn Weldon (right) and Matthew Davis during a recent game.

"It's been that way now for the fifth year in a row that we've played each other. I think of those four, two went to overtime, two went to double overtime."

RYAN OSSENMACHER

Salem head coach

Wednesday, also at Plymouth Cultural Center.

On the opposite side of the bracket are Livonia Churchill, Woodhaven and Trenton. The state-ranked Chargers (17-7) will play Woodhaven at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Trenton's Kennedy Ice Center.

The host Trojans will face the winner of that game at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, with the championship game slated for Canton's Arctic Edge Arena at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 4.

Final tuneups

Both Salem and Plymouth are staying as sharp as possible in the final week of the regular season, with some close, hard-fought games.

The Rocks defeated Romeo 6-5 on Tuesday, thanks to an overtime goal by

Shawn Weldon. Wednesday, Marty Mills scored twice as Salem and Hartland played to a 2-2 overtime tie.

"You can probably put Hartland in the top-two discussion, if not (for) the best team in the state," Ossenmacher said. "From that, we did well. They went up 2-1 early in the third and we came back to tie it."

"So for us to go play two overtime games in a row against two really quality opponents, that's exactly what you're looking for to get ready for playoffs."

Plymouth split a pair of games with Northville, winning 4-2 before dropping a 4-1 decision.

"I really liked our game against Northville that we won 4-2," Vento said. "I thought we carried the play (outshot them 34-19) and played our most complete game in all three zones."

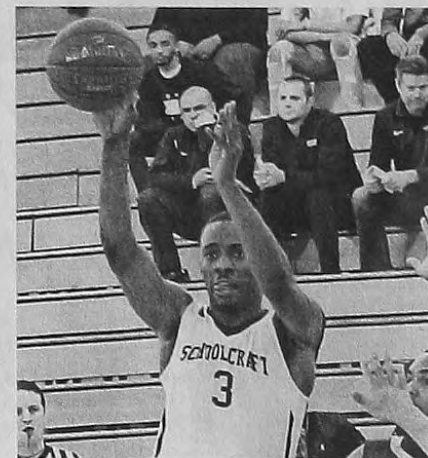
"Our final game against Northville was a bit of a lackluster effort. I think most minds were on our first playoff game vs. Salem, which is understandable."

"With that being said, I still thought we did some things well and most importantly we came out of our last game with no injuries or suspensions so we should have everyone available for our first playoff game."

tsmith@hometownlife.com

Twitter: @TimSmith_Sports

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Schoolcraft College's Charles Penn takes a jumper Wednesday night against Delta College. At left for the Pioneers is Salem alum Jonathan Swift.

Schoolcraft breaks loose to defeat Delta, 64-48

Tim Smith

hometownlife.com

After scoring just 22 first-half points Wednesday thanks to a claustrophobic zone defense by Delta College, Abe Mashhour had a simple intermission message for his Schoolcraft College men's basketball team.

"We don't walk the ball up the floor," Mashhour said, recalling his locker room chat. "That's not what we do and that's not what we're good at."

The good news about the opening 20 minutes was the Pioneers also scored just 22 points. Schoolcraft upped the tempo and the points followed in the second half as the Ocelots came away with a 64-48 victory.

With the Michigan Community College Athletic Association victory, No. 10-ranked Schoolcraft improved to 19-5 overall and 11-2 in the conference, grabbing a share of first place with Macomb.

"To their credit, they did a very good job of slowing us down," Mashhour said. "The first time (against Delta), we scored over 50 against them (in the half) and 111 for the game."

"So I'm sure their game plan was, 'Hey, let's slow these guys down.' They did a good job with their match-up zone and they did slow us down. For us, it was a matter of being persistent in what we want to do. In the first half, they wanted to slow us down and we let them slow us down. You can't play the game that way."

Concurring was Schoolcraft assistant coach Corey McKendry, former Livonia Clarenceville head coach.

"First half, they played well and we kind of struggled to adjust to some of the things they were doing," McKendry said. "But in the second half, we did a nice job of playing and moving the ball. (Sophomore forward) Charles Penn had a really good half for us and got us going. Things are headed in the right direction for us."

Penn led the Ocelots with 14 points and 10 rebounds, while sophomore forward Tariiq Jones chipped in 13 points and five boards.

Schoolcraft started to break loose in the final two minutes of the first half, when freshman guard D'Angelo Hansbro (12 points, four assists) drained a pair of treys. The second made it a 22-17 Ocelots lead with 1:34 left.

The Pioneers (9-13, 6-8) drew even at 22-22 when sophomore guard and Salem alum Jonathan Swift (a team-high 12 points) made a pair of foul shots in the final seconds. One of Swift's Salem teammates, sophomore forward Allante Wheeler, scored three points in the contest.

Early in the second half, the Ocelots got it going on another 3-pointer, this one from freshman guard Armani Tinsley (six points).

Schoolcraft's lead finally reached double digits with 10:15 remaining, when sophomore guard Esa Abduljami scored a bucket. He finished with nine points.

Delta got closer a couple of times, with Swift driving through the paint for a layup to make it a 45-37 game with 6:45 to go.

But the Ocelots finally broke loose with a pair of three-point plays, by Penn and Jones, just 1:40 apart. That opened up a 54-39 lead with 4:18 remaining.

"We're getting better in critical areas, our execution is getting better," Mashhour said. "Our poise is getting better. Remember, it was a new team; even though we have some sophomores, we didn't have a lot of returners."

SC WOMEN FALL: In Wednesday's opening game, the Schoolcraft College women's team lost 52-48 to Delta. Scoring 16 points for the Ocelots was sophomore guard Rainy McCune. Schoolcraft dropped to 10-15 overall and 9-2 in the MCCA, while Delta improved to 14-9, 9-3.

tsmith@hometownlife.com

COLLEGE BOWLING

Schoolcraft bowling teams off to nationals

It was twice as nice for the Schoolcraft College bowling teams at the NJCAA Region 12 Bowling Tournament, held Feb. 17 at Merri-Bowl Lanes, as both the men's and the women's teams chased down first-place finishes and secured berths in the national tournament.

Though both teams ended up going home with the hardware, they took two completely different paths to get there.

The Lady Ocelots jumped out to an early lead in the six-team tournament and never looked back, leading by a comfortable margin wire-to-wire. The men made things a bit more interesting, trailing fast-becoming rival Ancilla College after the doubles portion of the tournament, then jumping ahead during the singles matches, before having to hold off one last rally from the appropriately-named Chargers during the Baker games.

"The pressure was on at the end because Ancilla was right behind us and we know they're a good team and what they're capable of," individual singles champ Cody Farr said. It was Ancilla that handed the men's team its only non-win of the year, a defeat at the Laker Invitational on Feb. 3 in Mt. Pleasant. That was the first non-first-place finish in a conference-only tournament for the Schoolcraft men since Feb. 27, 2015.

"It was good to see how our guys responded when faced with a little adversity," coach Patrick Yelsik said. "Being able to close and put a team away, especially one as talented as Ancilla, is big and really says something about what this team is made of."

Farr rolled an impressive 643 three-game series to take home the singles crown. Right behind him in second place was fellow Ocelots freshman Matt Gury with 621. Farr and Gury



The Schoolcraft College men's and women's bowling teams celebrate their regional championships.

were two of the six Ocelots to be named to the all-region team, along with Matthew Westemeier, Lonnie Lawrence, Ryan Gasparovich and Andrew Gury.

The ladies spun their way to a comfortable 650-pin cushion over second-place Muskegon. Freshman Kayla Jackson once again led the charge for Schoolcraft, taking the singles title via a 585 series as well as overall individual honors with an eight-game tally of 1,450 pins. Joining Jackson on the all-region team were freshman Sharon Kovacs and Livonia Franklin product sophomore Ashley Schou, who finished ninth in the overall individual standings with a total pin fall of 1,197.

"For sophomores like myself, this was the last time we're going to be playing here (Merri-Bowl) and it had

the potential to be the last time we suited up as an Ocelot," Schou said. "We're a prideful bunch, so even though it was a mentally and physically exhausting day, we pulled together and were able to perform well enough to advance and extend our season."

Both Ocelots teams will now compete in the NJCAA national tournament March 3-4 in Buffalo, N.Y., where they will square off against the best two-year colleges from across the nation.

"We're now at a point with our program that just going to nationals isn't the end goal of ours, we feel like we can really do something there," Yelsik said. "We've put in the work. We've done the hard part, now we just have to do what we know we're capable of and have some fun."

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Should you consider an internal career move?

BY MATT TARPEY
 CAREERBUILDER

We tend to expect a new job to be a step up or a move forward in our career, but career paths are rarely a straight line. If you reach a point in your career where you feel stuck because of few opportunities for advancement or an industry that doesn't live up to expectations, your best option may be a lateral shift.

And to make a lateral career move, you often don't have to look beyond your current employer. Here are some tips for making a lateral career move within your company:

Impress your current boss

When people say look before you leap, they usually mean make sure you have an idea of where you'll land. But when making a lateral career move, where you're jumping from is just as important as where you're jumping to.

"First, you need to make sure you are exceeding the expectations of your supervisor before you start to inquire about openings in other departments," says Kolby Goodman, owner of The Job Huntr career services. "The first person your potential new boss will talk to is your current boss, so you need to



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make sure you are performing above and beyond."

Start networking

You may not be leaving your employer, but making an internal job change is still essentially the same as a traditional job search in many ways. Building and leveraging a professional network is crucial to any job search—internal shifts included.

"Start early and build relationships. Identify the areas where you potentially want to pursue a role and then look for the 'connectors' in those areas with whom you can build a relationship," says Emily Kapit, triple certified resumé writer and lead career strategist at ReFresh Your Step,

LLC. "Initially, it's less about you moving and more about an interest in that department, so ask questions about their work, the projects they work on, and what changes they see coming down the pipeline. Build these relationships since so many roles are filled internally."

Gain experience

With an internal lateral move, you already have a foot in the door. This gives you a leg up on the competition – so don't be afraid to take advantage of it.

"Get involved in cross-departmental projects," Goodman says. "This will give you a better look into other departments, the inner workings and

operations and the management styles and potential politics. It also allows you to be seen as a valuable contributor outside of your own team."

Check internal job boards

Many companies like to fill openings with internal hires, often for the same reasons you might be considering a new position within the company. To make these moves easier, some companies have internal job boards for current employees to browse open positions.

"Always pay attention to updates on internal job boards. If managers of your own team are helpful, sometimes they can introduce you to other

teams for new opportunities as well," says Andy Chan, founder of Prime Opt, a career coaching center designed to help professionals with international backgrounds land jobs in the U.S. "When possible, schedule informational interviews with hiring managers of other teams to gain insights on what working on a particular team [is] like."

Communicate

Searching for jobs while currently employed is a tricky situation to navigate. That's why Ken Kanara, managing director at Ex-Consultants Agency, which works with clients to place talent in permanent and project-based roles, says transparency is always the recommended path. "As soon as you know you'd like to make a lateral move in the organization and a real opportunity exists, it's critical to have an open and honest conversation with your supervisor," he says. "Be honest about why you've made the decision, and lay out a transition plan so they aren't left with a problem."

Matt Tarpey is a writer for the Advice & Resources section on CareerBuilder.com. He researches and writes about job search strategy, career management, hiring trends and workplace issues.

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Requirements: Position requires Master's degree in mechanical engineering and 6 months experience performing energy audits for industrial facilities. Six months experience in required in each of the following:

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- Skilled Laborers – Lawn Mtce. & Gardening

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*A valid **Chauffeur License** and Medical Certification required for this position.

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Car Report

COMPACT BUT CAPABLE, HYUNDAI'S SANTA FE SPORT IS SUPERCHARGING THE BRAND'S SUCCESSFUL CATCH-UP EFFORTS IN SUVs



By Dale Buss

As Hyundai sales grew in the United States several years ago, one of the company's biggest concerns was that the evolution of its model lineup

was sedan-heavy. And the mega-shift by American consumers toward sport-utility vehicles and crossovers was still in its relatively early stages.

Sure, Hyundai has taken some lumps in terms of sales and market share because of that imbalance. But over the last few years, Hyundai has addressed this challenge head-in by fielding an SUV and crossover lineup that has expanded to three vehicles: Tucson, Santa Fe and the smaller Santa Fe Sport.

In fact, as Hyundai set a record for 2016 sales, it reported that the SUV/ CUV segment "led the charge," with sales up four percent for December and 41 percent for the year. Combined sales of Santa Fe and Santa



Automated collision-avoidance features pace Sport.



Santa Fe Sport's great "greenhouse" promises wide-open summer viewing.

Fe Sport were up 14 percent for the month, making it the best Santa Fe December ever, while also achieving double-digit growth on the year.

My experiences with Santa Fe Sport made it easy to understand why Americans have gravitated to the latest Hyundai offering, even as the number of SUV and crossover models available from so many other brands have proliferated as well.

Santa Fe Sport proved versatile as I put it through a variety of uses, ranging from quick trips and local errands to a couple-day trek to northern Michigan on one of the last snowy weekends of this more-than-temperate winter. Its all-wheel-drive capabilities came as advertised.

In fact, one feature that I appreciated the most during that trip was Sport's panoramic sunroof, which — added to the substantial "green-

house" provided by the vehicle in total — provided plenty of opportunity to enjoy the ever-changing landscape of Michigan.

The 2017 version of Santa Fe Sport has refreshed styling in the front and rear along with numerous updates of features, including a height adjustment for the power passenger seat, a larger five-inch standard display and an available seven-inch touchscreen with Android Auto.

Newly offered safety features, according to Edmunds.com, include adaptive headlights with automatic high beams, an electronic parking brake, a 360-degree parking camera, lane-departure warning and adaptive cruise control with automatic emergency braking.

Automakers are introducing new automated-safety features all



The 2017 Santa Fe Sport has been a great entry for Hyundai.

the time, but I found that Santa Fe Sport's adaptive cruise control came in especially handy on a long trek north on Interstate 75 — and back again. The slow-down and speed-up transitions when adjusting for traffic ahead of me were markedly smooth, for example, helping give me confidence to rely heavily on the system for a matter of days. It never let me down.

Sport seats five, while the larger Santa Fe seats seven. But cargo capacity was plenty for jamming all

sorts of stuff for a long trip. The four-cylinder, 2.0-liter, turbocharged engine in the Sport I drove — the more powerful of its two powertrain options — generated a robust 240 horsepower and pushed right through some challenging northern Michigan terrain.

And like all Hyundai vehicles, the handling of Santa Fe Sport was right in the health middle: responsive, not stiff. Right in the mainstream where Hyundai needs to stay in order to continue its SUV-powered surge.

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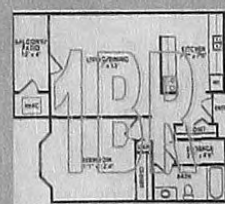
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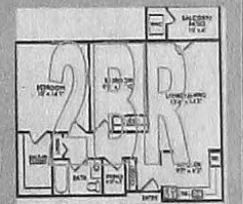
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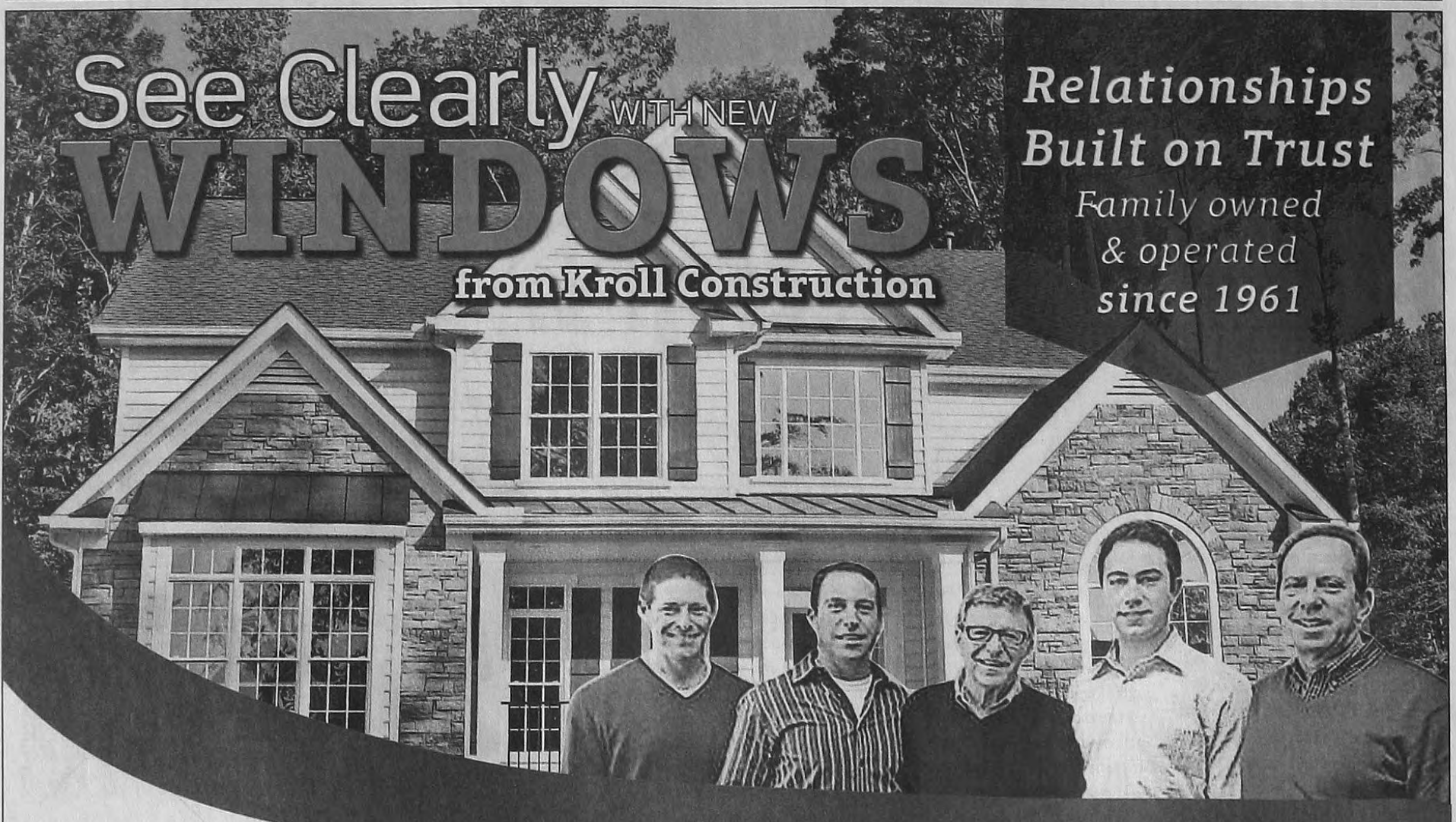
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