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SUNDAY 12.24.17 II HOMETOWNLIFE.COM II PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## Pawn shop defendants avoid jail

Pair plead no contest and get probation, diversion program

**Darrell Clem**

hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

A Detroit pawn shop owner and employee, accused of selling merchandise stolen from stores in Canton and other southeast Michigan communities, have averted prison, court records show.

iPawn Detroit owner Gasswan Usama Gargis, 39, has been placed on probation for six months after he pleaded no contest to one count of organized retail crime, according to Wayne County Circuit Court records.

Gargis recently accepted a plea deal after authorities agreed to dismiss 14 other charges such as conducting a

criminal enterprise, receiving and concealing stolen property over \$1,000 and failing to keep records of financial transactions.

He could have faced 20 years in prison if he had gone to trial and been convicted of crimes involving his pawn shop on Eight Mile Road.

Gargis was placed on probation by



Gargis



Razon

Wayne County Circuit Judge Ulysses Boykin, according to online court records.

iPawn employee Trisha-Lynette Viado Razon, 20, meanwhile, has been placed on a diversion program for first-time, non-violent offenders, a court clerk said. If

See PAWN, Page A2



Six-month-old Sofia Longordo and Omar Arzola, 9, pose for a photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## WISH LISTS

Children share their Christmas hopes with Santa

Children from around the hometownlife.com readership area share their "wish lists" for Santa:

**Dear Santa,**

Santa, sum qeshds to ask you. 1. How do your reindeer fly? 2. Ware did you get your majik? Cude you give my mom 2 or 3 rings and my dad some crase sos and me lego Harry Potter the video game?

Your friend,

**Brennan Boyd**

P.S. Save some cookies four Mrs. Claus

**Dear Santa,**

I love you. Is Mrs. Claus good? How are you Santa? Santa can you please give me a Barbie, top and a toysets. Santa can you please give my mom a cap. Santa can you please give my dad a phone.

Your friend,

**Nisha ShaShi Kumer**

PS I love Rudolph and you

**Dear Santa,**

How is your riamdeer? How are you? Can you give my mom som julary? Can you give my dad a new phone and for me can you give me a new barbi doll and a barbi doll houes? can you give my friend Sagi a nintendo set. can you give poor people toys? And I promise I will give the raindeer carrots.

Your friend,

**Ananya Gautam**

PS You are Roking, you are awsom.

**Dear Santa,**

I love you. I love your reindeer. I love Mrs. Claus. My elf on the shelf wold like some clos. My sos wold like some socks with you on it.

My mom wold like a cofr. My dad wold like a new car. I wold like a Barbie.

Your friend,

**Morgan Scott**

PPS You awesome! I love Rudolph and Santa. You are the best.

See LETTERS, Page A4

## Arts academy benefit helps victims from Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

**Brad Kadrich**

hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

When students at the Plymouth-Canton Arts Academy noticed the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands still struggling after hurricanes ripped through them earlier this year, they decided they wanted to do something.

So they turned their annual charity fundraiser into a benefit to help those struggling from hurricane damage. The sixth annual benefit, dubbed

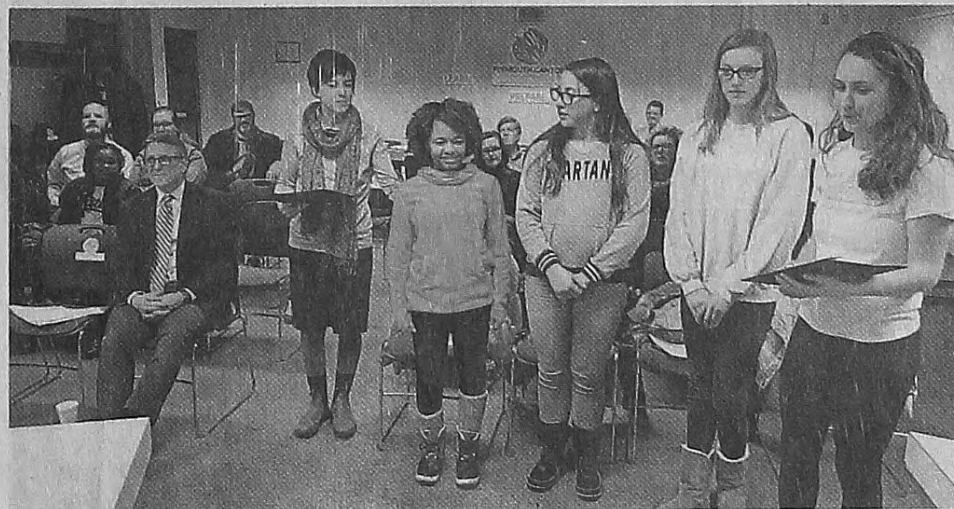
Supuerto Rico, raised more than \$1,100 to help Puerto Rico and the Friends of the Virgin Islands.

Salem High School senior Sam Klozik, a member of the arts academy's student advisory board, engineered the event.

"It turned out better than I could have expected," Klozik said. "I was so proud with everyone coming out of their own bubbles and coming together to do their jobs."

The effort earned the arts academy

See BENEFIT, Page A2



Arts academy adviser Amy Willacker-Brown (left) and student advisory council members Marquette Winston, Kaia Thomas, Madelyn Turrill and Sam Klozik accepted accolades from the Plymouth-Canton Board of Education. BRAD KADRICH



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INDEX Classified ..... B5-7 Obituaries ..... A9

# P-CEP named to list of nation's top hospitality programs

Plymouth-Canton Educational Park has been named to the 2018 Elite 50, an annual selection of the top 50 secondary school hospitality programs in the nation.

The Elite 50 list recognizes high schools as well as career and technical centers that have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in hospitality education. These schools set the standard for secondary school training in culinary arts, baking and pastry arts and/or hospitality management.

These elite programs are also marked by strong enrollment and a dedication to community outreach. Many of this year's Elite 50 programs have won state and national competitions for ProStart, SkillsUSA and Family Career and Community Leaders of America.



The Plymouth-Canton Educational Park culinary program has been named as among the tops in the nation by Sullivan (Ky.) University. FILE PHOTO

The National Center for Hospitality Studies at Sullivan University in Louisville oversees the selection process for the Elite 50 list.

"We also conducted research to establish schools with strong hospitality enrollment and influence in their com-

munity," said Lauren Gold, director of high school programs at Sullivan University. "Included are many schools we

specifically paid visits to that we deemed to have strong hospitality programs."

More than 350 schools

designated as Hospitality Programs of Distinction were invited to apply for the honor of being named to the Elite 50 list. Criteria for the schools selected for the Elite 50 included an original recipe with photos or a restaurant management design and instructor education/certification background and informational materials such as videos or brochures about the school's program. Further consideration was given to schools that operate a restaurant or catering service as part of their culinary and hospitality training.

The National Center for Hospitality Studies at Sullivan University is

known as one of the finest post-secondary hospitality training institutions in the nation and offers programs in culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, hotel and restaurant management, event management and tourism and hospitality management. Every year, graduates from the National Center for Hospitality Studies pursue successful careers in virtually every corner of the globe and every aspect of the hospitality industry.

For additional information about the 2018 Elite 50 list, go to <http://pages.sullivan.edu/elite50/winners.asp>.

## PAWN

Continued from Page A1

Razon stays out of trouble, she can keep the charges off her record. She could have faced five years in prison if convicted as charged.

Earlier phone calls to iPawn Detroit were not returned.

Gargis and Razon had been charged in August amid allegations they

bought stolen high-end electronics, kitchen appliances, generators, jewelry, power tools and other merchandise, police have said. They faced a total of 21 charges in what authorities called an organized retail crime scheme.

Gargis of Commerce Township and Razon of Orchard Lake had pleaded not guilty as they faced the charges, which followed a six-month investigation that culmi-

nated with Canton police executing a search warrant in June at the pawn shop and the owner's home.

Police say they recovered more than \$300,000 in stolen merchandise. Canton Deputy Police Chief Craig Wilsher had called it a "very extensive" list of goods taken from big box stores such as Walmart, Home Depot and Target in southeast Michigan, including Canton.

The case was handled by Canton police, Michigan State Police and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy had called the charges "the result of months of tedious and exhaustive work by the Canton Police Department and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office."

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## BENEFIT

Continued from Page A1

students the STARS (Students with Tenacity and Reaching Success) Award from the Plymouth-Canton Board of Education. Faculty adviser Amy Willacker-Brown accepted certificates on behalf of the 58 students involved in putting on the benefit, which included a silent auction and more than

two dozen acts that took part in a concert that included live painting, music and dancers.

The silent auction included all student-donated art work. In fact, the entire production was student run.

"Every bit is student run," Willacker-Brown said. "It is also an example of what has emerged, in my eyes, as a characteristic of the academy and that is a passion for doing meaningful work."

The production didn't come without its challenges. There was some confusion about the site, but administrators worked with the students and eventually landed the benefit at the PARC in downtown Plymouth.

Willacker-Brown talked about "creating space" for students to "do big things." When you do that, she said, "often leaders emerge."

"That's what happened here," Willacker-Brown said. "(Klozik) came in

the first day and said, 'I'm running the benefit.' And she did."

The experience was "amazing," Klozik said.

"This year's experience for me was unique," Klozik told the school board. "My sister's class actually started the idea of the annual benefit. She got the opportunity to attend this one and she bawled her eyes out right along with me."

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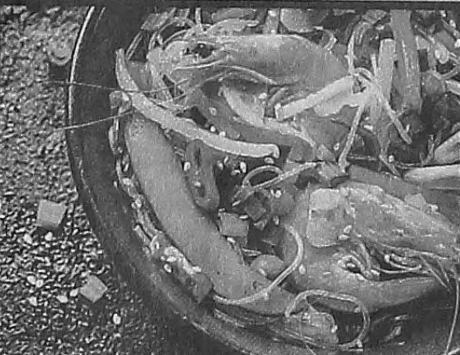
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### Unagi (Eel)

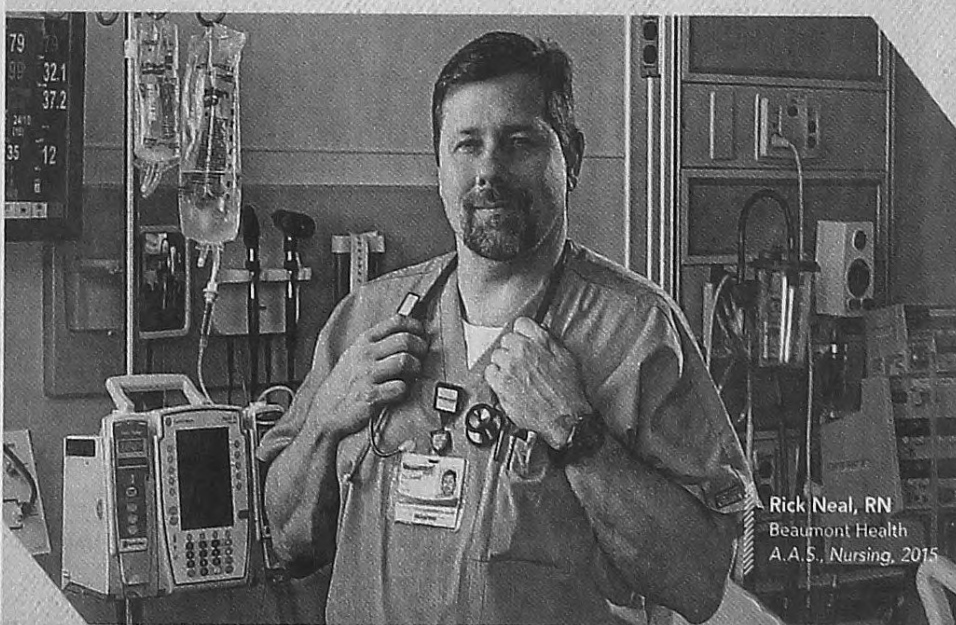
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### PLYMOUTH POLICE BRIEFS

#### Driver's sex toy mistaken for indecent exposure

A woman driving in Plymouth Township called police to report that a man was exposing himself to her while they were stopped at a traffic light at Ann Arbor and Haggerty roads.

Turns out he was trying to put a sex toy in his pants to surprise his wife, according to police.

Police stopped the man in his silver Ford Edge after receiving initial reports that he was exposing himself. He also was violating a law by not wearing his seat belt as he tried to put the sex toy in the zipper of his pants, a police report said.

The man told police he had intended to take a picture with the sex toy in his pants and send it to his wife as a joke, the report said.

Police checked back with the woman who complained and she said it could have been a case of mistaken indecent exposure.

Police gave the man a ticket for not wearing a seat belt during the Nov. 30 incident and advised him to make better decisions while driving.

#### Unemployment fraud

Police have received a rash of reports from residents of attempts to file fraudulent unemployment claims in their names.

A 45-year-old woman who lives on Mapletree Drive told police Dec. 11 that someone stole her identification and filed for unemployment benefits using her maiden name. She contacted the state of Michigan to report the incident and was advised to monitor her credit report for fraudulent activity.

A 48-year-old man who lives on Chestnut Court notified police Dec. 11 after the company he works for con-

tacted him to report that someone was trying to file unemployment claims in his name.

A 57-year-old man who lives on Westbury Drive told police the human resources department on his job notified him of a similar attempt.

And Dec. 10, a 34-year-old man who lives on Dogwood Drive said someone also tried to seek unemployment benefits through his employer.

It appeared from the police reports that most of the attempts had failed.

#### Combative suspect

A 35-year-old suspect pulled his pants down and became verbally combative with police during an investigation into allegations he was driving recklessly and struck two curbs before he pulled into a McDonald's parking lot, a police report said.

Police caught up with the man near Beck and M-14 during the Dec. 1 incident, but he refused to reveal his identity, the report said. He dropped his pants in front of bystanders, including children, and told police he had no weapons. He also began to yell obscenities and at once point called officers racist.

The report indicated the man had been drinking. He was taken into custody, but later released with a citation for being disorderly.

#### Bah, humbug!

There must be a Scrooge in town.

A 67-year-old man who lives on Thornbridge Drive notified police after he tried to turn on his outdoor Christmas display and discovered the cord to a white Christmas tree had been cut.

He told police he had no idea who might have done it.

—By Darrell Clem

### CANTON POLICE BRIEFS

#### Man threatens White Castle employee

Canton police were called to the White Castle on Ford Road, west of Interstate 275, after a 52-year-old Westland became angry with an employee and tried to climb over the counter to fight, a report said.

The incident unfolded about 1:35 a.m. Dec. 17, when the suspect began eating chicken that was on the counter, even though it wasn't his. He became upset when a cashier told him that he would have to pay for it, the report said. The suspect began to threaten the cashier and started to climb over the counter, but he was pulled back by a friend who was with him.

According to police, the suspect blamed his behavior on the recent death of his mother. The two men left White Castle, but police tracked down the suspect, gave him a trespassing notice and told him to stay away from the White Castle.

The employee told police she didn't want to pursue other charges because she feared the suspect would return.

#### Phone call scam

A 35-year-old Canton woman gave her bank debit card number to a caller who said she needed to pay money or she would be arrested on two warrants stemming from a missed court appearance, a report said.

The caller falsely claimed to be an Ann Arbor police officer. After getting the woman's debit card number, the caller then asked for a credit card number. At that point, the woman became suspicious, hung up the phone and notified police. The incident occurred Dec. 15.

The woman canceled the debit card that had been compromised. The report didn't indicate if the woman actually had warrants for her arrest

or, if she did, how the caller knew.

#### Business owner scammed

A 27-year-old business owner was scammed out of \$492 after a caller, claiming to be from DTE Energy, threatened to shut off her power unless she paid an overdue bill. The caller made the threat Dec. 13, even though the woman said she had paid the bill.

The woman was told to buy a prepaid MoneyPak card and to provide the numbers on the back, allowing the caller to get the money. The woman called DTE to confirm her payment and was told that she had been the victim of a scam.

—By Darrell Clem

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# LETTERS

Continued from Page A1

**Dear Santa,**

How is Mrs. Claus doing. How are you doing. I want a ipone toht please and I thing my brother wants a xbox. My mom wil want juarly and my dad wont dmeo.

Your friend,

**Nicholas Allen**

PS Please giv me a Zomee kitty.

**Dear Santa,**

Can I have a x-box, d-s, pupy, bown for my pupy and pupy food for my pupy. The one thing I wont you to get for som one else is the nife gun bar sotr for my pupy. Will you help pepal from all over the wrold with wote thay do not have but they ned?

Wile you ples leve some coclet cip pankak on the tabol of Vdhaysher Bhangu on Crismis Eve?

**Lincoln Hicks**

**Dear Santa,**

You are awesome oh I forgot will you give my mom a hug prety please, oh and my dad because you are a hugr man and can I have a lol dolls! ho ho that was I an my baby.

PS I love you PS you like me PS I like your shop PS we made one.

Your friend,

**Olivia Hunter**

**Dear Santa,**

How's Mrs. Claws? I'd like to too know? How are the reindeers? My mom would like some new books. My dad would like some cozy socks. I would like the American Girl doll loft bed. Have a safe trip Santa! Please! I will be a good girl! Please Santa please!

From your friend,

**Scarlett Barnes**

**Dear Santa,**

Can I get a dog Santa you ur th best. Oh, can my big broher get a xbox. Wack me up when you come. I will give you hot coklat I will give you a hug, and can you give my mom art splis. It will make her happy and for my dad can you give him a hamrse, can I have hatchamoles and can I have a FYW shoos. I hop your reindeer do good! and can you leve some elves at ur hows.

Have a good trip.

**Mantra Joshi**

**Dear Santa,**

How is Mrs. Claus doing. Will you give my mom a bracelet plesae. Can you plesae get me a new Barbie. Can you please get me som enew Barbie stuff. Have a good Christmas.

Please give me a pupy in my pcket.

Your friend,

**Brynn Klein**

PPS Please give me hatch a les. Please give me a Mermaid Barbie.



Santa and Mrs Claus will be busy this week. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

list.

Your friend,

**Nolan Dewberry**

**Dear Santa,**

How is Mrs. Claus doing. My mom wants jewelry. My dad wants a bike. I want a phone and a hot whells set imag-inext DC Super Friends Batman Batbot extreme. My sister wants a barbie movie. I am gowing to leave you some cookies.

Your friend,

**Filip Beslagic**

**Dear Santa,**

How are your elves? Santa can you get my dad a mobile and Santa can you get my mom a kitchen set and Santa can you get me a Lego.

Your friend,

**Jayaditya Singh**

**Dear Santa,**

This year can I have a lol big surprise ball and For Robert can he have some carss. For dad can you get him some ear-bubs. For mom and you get TV for Rick can he have a video games.

Love,

**Chloe Walker**

PS Can I have a dog to! You are awesome! Make sure yoyu wake me up when you get here.

**Dear Santa,**

You are the best. I love the presents you make! This year please bring me: Kids cleaning tools, a sewing machine and hatchamoles. For my brothers bring Paw potrol toys. My mom would love two blue errins. For my dad bring Nike socks. Oh, and if you come wake me up. I am making presents for you.

Your friend,

**Evayla Georgieva**

PS Can you bring me a stuff animal cat? Put me on the nice list.

**Dear Santa,**

How are you doing? How is Mrs. Claus doing? How is Rudolph doing? Please bring my sister an iPhone 7. I would like a new controller for my x-box. And Beethoven's Christmas adventure, Battlefield 2. please for Christmas.

Your friend,

**Jackson Schwartzberger**

PS I love you Santa so so so much.

**Dear Santa,**

I love you Santa. How are your reindeers. How is Mrs. Claus. Can you bring me a game. Can you bring me a dall. Can you bring my sister a game like me. Can you bring my mom a jewelry set. Can you bring my dad a pot. You are awesome!! You are cool!!

Please Santa please please please. You are kind and nice. Please Please please plesae. Please Santa.

Your friend,

**Purva Sonawane**

PS You are very good

**Dear Santa,**

I love you. Can you please give people thead don't have homes very more food. Santa I love you but don't ubawt me car abawt por people. People that don't have stof.

PS Please drop off a choclit chip cake at my hows.

**Noah Silverman**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas Eve? Im very excited for Christmas. I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom would like a shef hat. My dad will like a tol blot. Bobey love a bed and a toy. Cameron will love a ben ten woch and he wants a modskl.

I want a ben ten woch and bat man vs mr frees. I can't wait until yo uvisit me on Christmas Eve. I will leave some milk and cookies for you.

Love,

**Kevin Daniel**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas Eve? How are you doing at the Nroth Pole? I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom would like a ring. My dad would like a running wuch. I really want a new corl and shells I can't wait until you visit me on Christmas Eve. I will leave cookies and milk for you and carrots for the reindeer.

Love,

**Ella Kazarian**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas eve? I'm very excited for Christmas! I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom would wot now shos. My dad would wot a new fish pll. My brth would wot a grbche. I would relly wot a hashmls and skwes. I can't wait until you visit me on Christmas Eve! I will ave some milk and cookies for you and carrots for the reindeer.

Love,

**Mackenzie Knierim**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas Eve? Do you hav a pat? I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom rile wost a nes a bacit. My dad nou fising pol. My Druvr wub like a gon. My dog wud like a cocotie. I wot a rel dog and a marc nrl doll. I can't wait until you visit me on Christmas Eve! I will leave some milk and cookies for you and carrots for the randeer.

Love,

**Maisy Lloyd**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas Eve? Santa is the best

man. I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom likes lohsin. My dad likes boxing gluvns. My sistr likes a newtendo. I like a gron. I can't wait until you visit me on Christmas Ev! I will leave some milk and cookies for you.

Love,

**Liam McGuigan**

**Dear Santa,**

Hello Santa! How is Mrs. Claus? I hope you are getting a lot of sleep before the big trip! I am wondering what kind of cooies are your favorite? Have many wishes this year. Please bring my mom an I phone. Please bring my dad a new watch. Please bring my brother Priyash a toy car. And please bring me a Barbie doll set. Have a great trip!

**Prisha Khairate**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi Santa are the elves making toys in shifts? How is your beard big? I have many wig this year. Please bring my Christopher a big nerf gun. Please bring my mom ane I phone. Please bring my dad a skroojriver. Bring me an Elf on the self.

**Matthew Campbell**

**Dear Santa,**

Hello Santa! Are the elves making toys? Get a lot of sleep and your rane drer too. Wots your favrit cooke? I have ben wandrng if you are nice?

Did you play flag football? How old are you? How old is Rodof? I love you cos you are nice. I have many wishis thes year. Please bring my mom a par of pink sliers and my dad Mishagin klos. Fish food and dog food for my little brothr Joshua. Ninga stuff for my sisitr Avery. A boy bayby aliv doll and fannaile me a dran.

Love,

**Drew Vanwashenova**

**Dear Santa,**

Hello Santa! How is Mrs. Claus? What are you going to eat on your trip? I have many wishes. Please bring my mom pink lip stick. Can you please bring a new black ladr for my dad? Bring my sister a jrivers lisints and new car. Bring a flat screen tv. Bring me a puppy and kittin. Bring my dog a dog toy. Bring my cat a yarn ball.

**Sophie Fields**

**Dear Santa,**

Hello Santa! How is Mrs. Claus? Are you feeding Rudolph for the big trip? How are the elves doing are they making toys? What is your favorite kind of ckooe? How log is your berd? How old are you? I have many wishes this year. Can you please give a tv in my room? For Stella can you please give

a new cupcake robe and a new phone? For my mom can you please give a new phone and a watch? Can you please give me a real cat?

**Lucia McCown**

**Dear Santa,**

Hello Santa! How is Copit? Is copit hethy? You bedr not be eting kucles! How are the horse I men the ran-der? I have many wishes this year. Mom was glotin fre cukes. Dad was macz-ings. Brody was trans-formrs. Jack food. Noxs suthing that he can noc ovr. Now me I wut a hatchimal.

**Avery Snyder**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi how are you. How is Mrs. Claus? I hope Mrs. Claus is a good girl? How good are you at soccer? I shood no that you are a good goalie because of your beleey! I have many wishes for my family. My mom wat a paar of slipers. My dad will wot a new robe. My brother Avery will wot Teck Deck set and I will wat lots of Hatonimals. Thank you Santa. You are the best.

**Payton Myles**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas Eve? How are you in the north pole? I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom would really like s shirt with some strips on it. My dad needs a new pair of sports shoes. I really want a pack of colered pencils and a board game. I can't wait until you visit me on Christmas Eve! I will leave some milk and cookies for you and carrots for the raindeer.

**Shreya Bettadapur**

**Dear Santa,**

Hi! Are you getting ready for Christmas Eve? I'm very excited for Christmas. I have a pretty big wish list this year. My mom would like a new car. My dad wants a new enter and exit sine for his restront. My little sister wants play doh and my dog wants a toy. I want a nerf gun. I cant wait until you vist me on Christmas Eve! I will leave some milk and cookies for you and carrots for the reindeer.

**Kinnel Chen**

**Dear Santa,**

Hello Santa! How is Mrs. Claus? Good luck on your big trip. I have many wishes this year. Please bring my mom a new foot mesager. Please bring my dad a new watch. Please bring me one pink and one purple hatchimal. Can you please say hi to Rudolph for me? Thank you!

**Sudeeksha Jois**

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## All Saints students travel back to Renaissance Faire



Fifth-graders at All Saints Catholic School in Canton recently took an afternoon trip back to the 1500s during the school's annual Renaissance Faire, complete with costumes, props and a feast fit for a king and queen. The event is a celebration of all things from the Renaissance time period, including art, culture, history, contests and games. Students carved sculptures from bars of soap and painted on mini canvases and also played sports like knight racing, with pool-noodle horses, and jousting, with orange cones, among other activities. The fifth-graders spent the last month learning about the contributions of people during the Renaissance, including the role of the Catholic Church. For more information, go to [www.allsaintscs.com](http://www.allsaintscs.com) or call 734-459-2490.

## Village Theater to host King holiday event

Canton Township will once again honor the memory and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a special tribute, Canton Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, Jan. 15, at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road.

A punch and cookie reception will begin at the Village Theater at 6 p.m., followed by the main program at 6:30 p.m. This annual event is presented by the Canton Commission for Culture, Arts and Heritage, members of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sub-Committee and Canton Township.

This year's keynote address will be presented by Dr. Doris J.

Fields, a professor at Eastern Michigan University, who has extensive experience in interracial and inter-ethnic communication.

The program will feature performances by Canton Community Choir and the Northridge Church Choral Ensemble.

Admission is \$2 per person (cash only) or the donation of one canned good to Open Door Ministry, a local food pantry and job bank. Both will be accepted at the door the night of the event.

For more information, call 734-394-5300 or go to [www.cantonvillagetheater.org](http://www.cantonvillagetheater.org).



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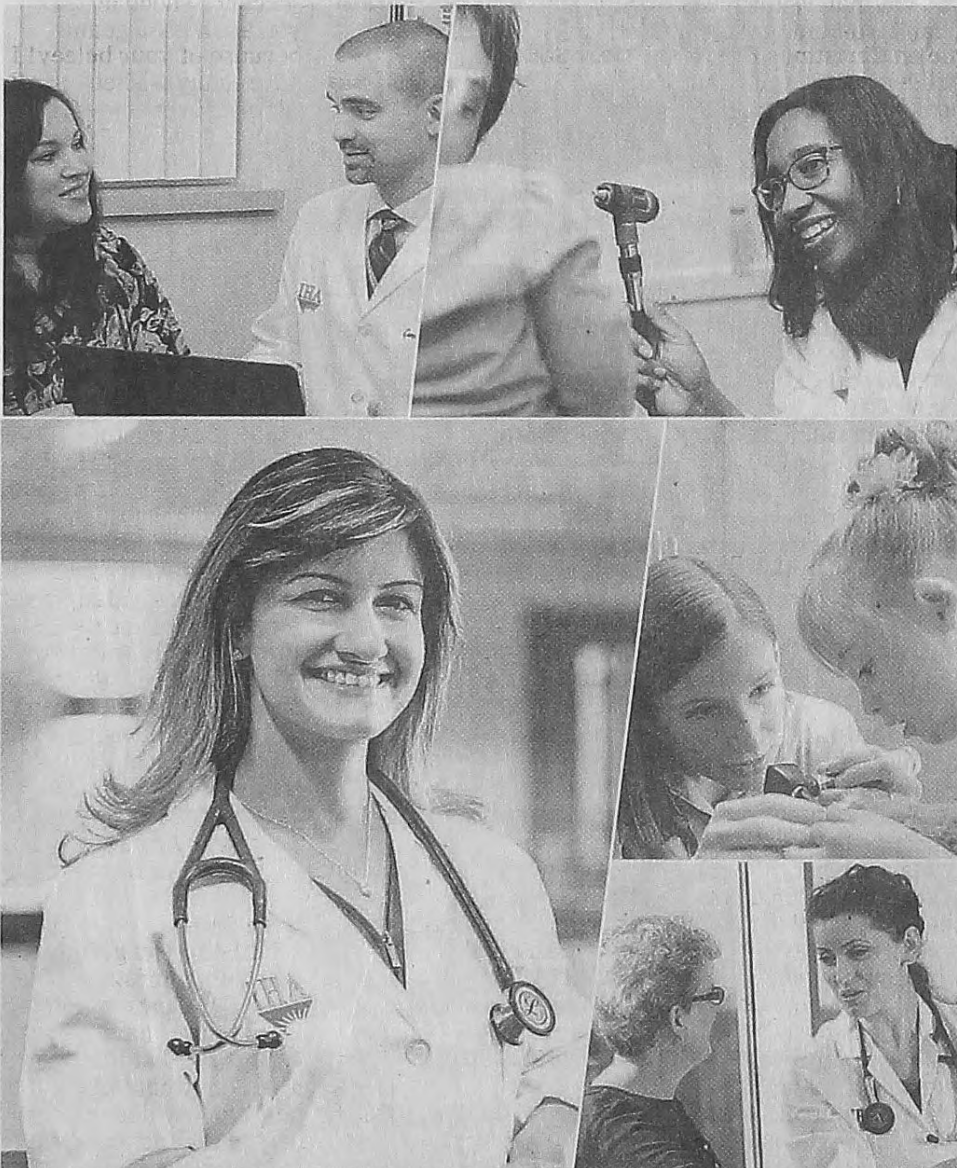
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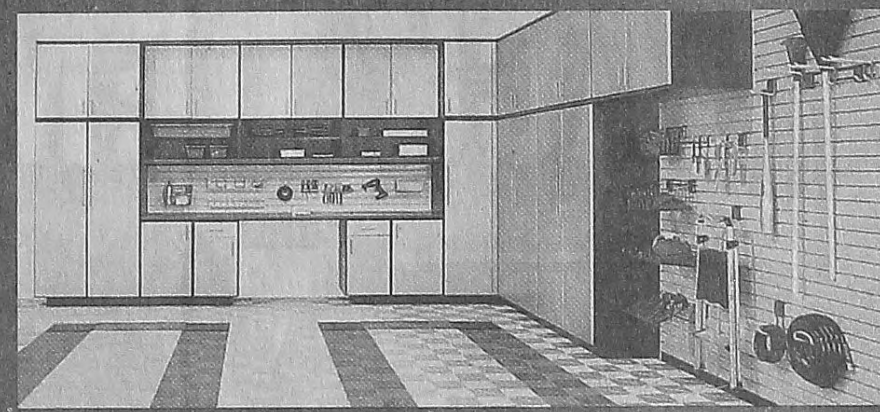


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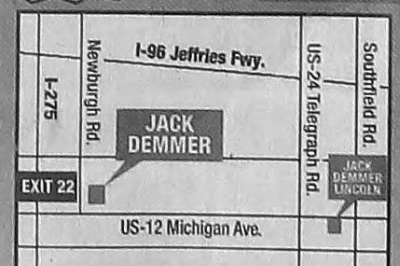
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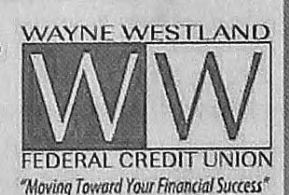
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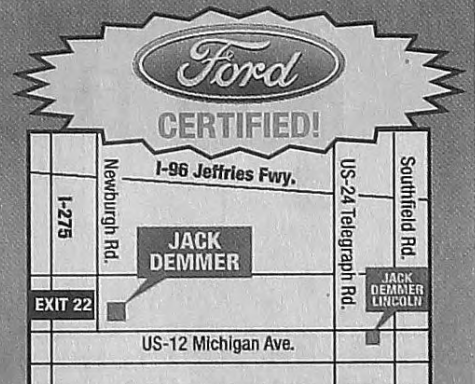
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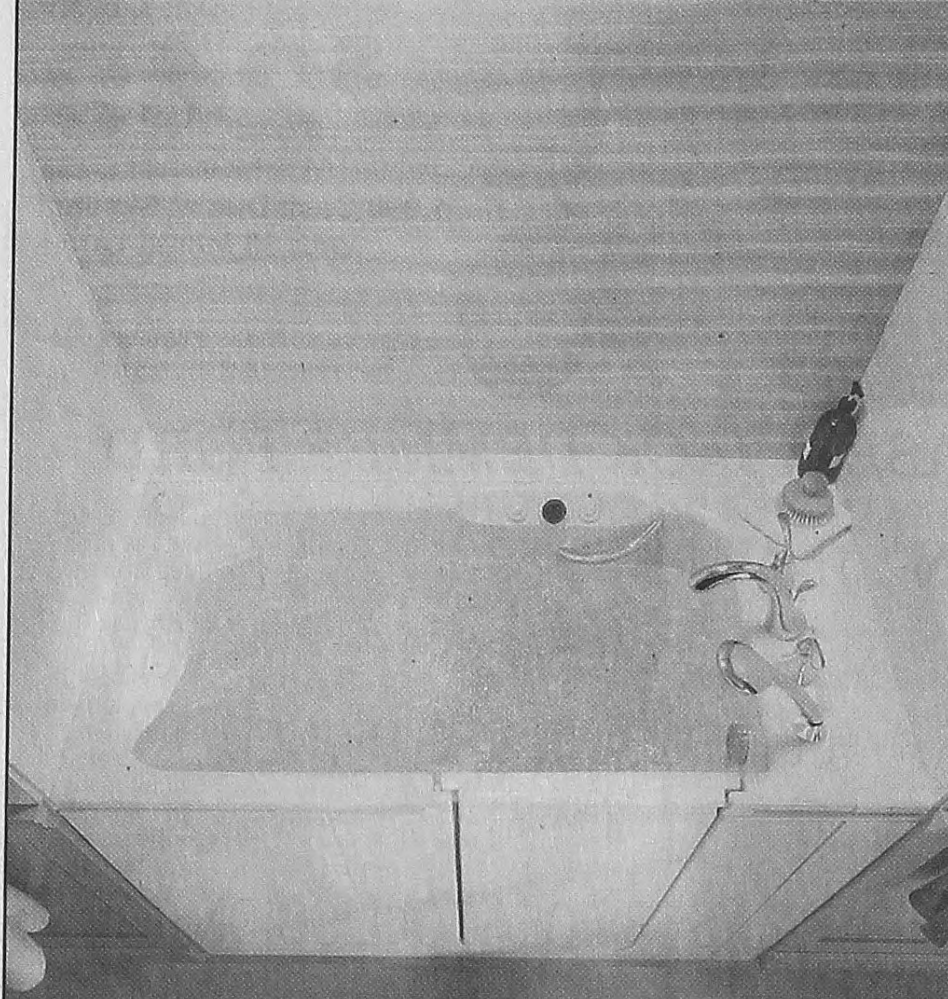
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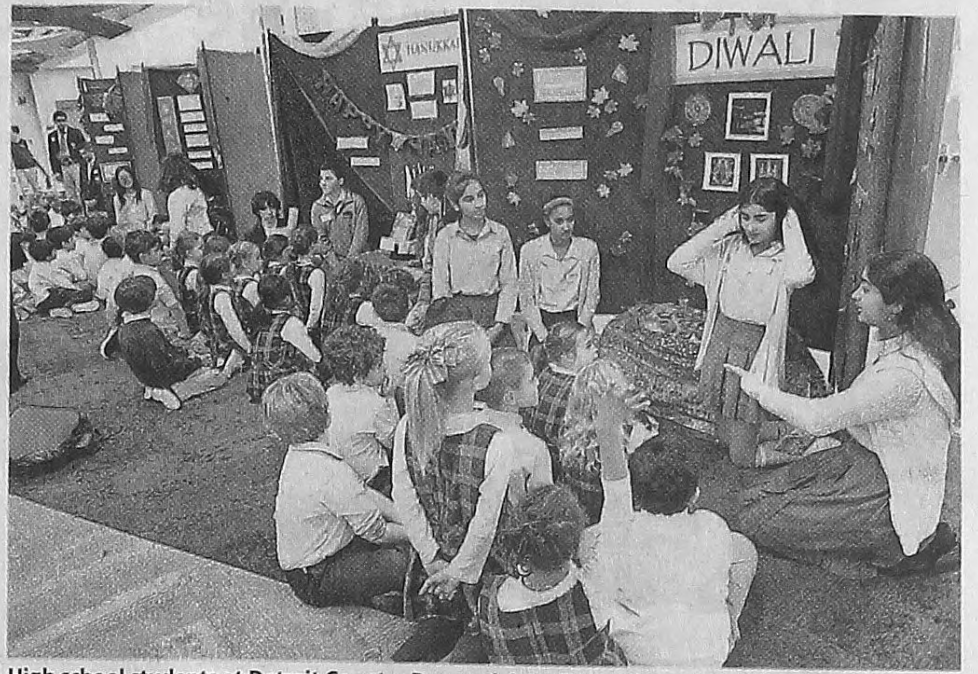
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High school students at Detroit Country Day explain holiday celebrations from different cultures to second-graders. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

## High school students teach diversity through holidays

**Brad Kadrich**

hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK —  
MICHIGAN

Detroit Country Day School officials felt like the holidays were a perfect time to teach younger students about the broad diversity of cultures that will be celebrating this time of year.

That's why DCDS high school students spent time last week with second-graders, helping them understand messages of diversity and hope during the holiday season.

Upper School students shared information about the history and significance of each holiday to younger students, accompanied by a colorful decorative display. This year's display included the Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Ramadan.

While the exhibits are beautiful and festive, they also teach an important global awareness and appreciation to the students and school community.

Junior Bella Baldwin said she felt it was "important to participate" in the cultural program.

"It really shows the big picture of our diverse world and the importance of respecting and understanding other religions and traditions around the holidays," Baldwin said. "It's amazing to see the second-graders so engaged in learning about other traditions that we all share and it paves the path for a peaceful future."

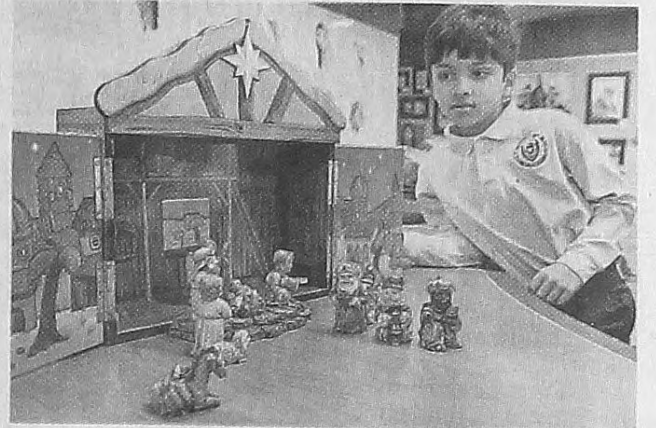
Baldwin said she thought the second-graders "learned a lot" about how diverse even just their group was.

"They saw that many people in their class and grade were from a different religion as them, but recognized that and were eager to learn more, from them and us," Baldwin said.

School officials said the program was designed to help younger students learn about traditions that may be different than their own become more thoughtful, compassionate and open-minded.

That's why freshman Nathan Schechter wanted to get involved. He said the learning goes both ways.

"I think it is important to participate in this program to teach both the second-graders and the presenters about the possibility of religious pluralism by showing them the different practices of each religion," Schechter said. "Today, the second-graders learned not only about the separate holidays, but also the differences and similarities between them."



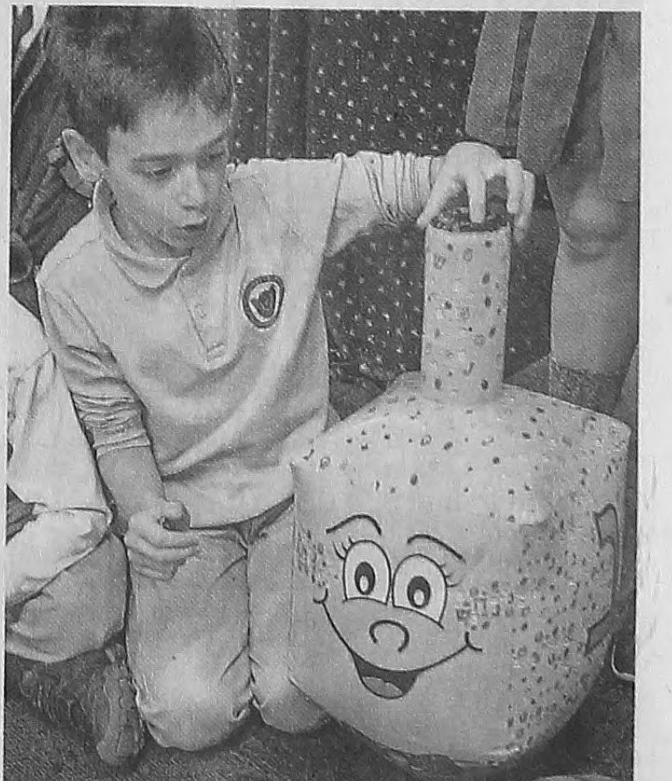
Krithin Marpur learns about the origins on the celebration of Christmas. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Kristina Zheng (right) and Anna Sunspeak teach about Chinese New Year celebrations. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Second-grade students hold a vessel used during the month of Ramadan. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM



Second-grader Rami Baroody spins a dreidel. BILL BRESLER | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

# Shortbread cookie recipe a Christmas tradition

**Diane K. Bert**

Special to HometownLife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Valerie Derrick explains making Scottish shortbread cookies this way: "It is part of my heritage."

"I remember as a young child helping my grandmother and mother make shortbread cookies," Derrick said. "My grandmother was part of the McGillivray clan. We called her Grannie Mac."

One relative is quoted as saying, "I feel sorry for any man who is not a Scot and any Scot who is not a McGillivray."

Making shortbread is particularly a Christmas tradition, but it is also made on other special occasions. In days past, butter and sugar were luxuries in Scotland, which made it expensive to make the cookies.

There are tips that have been passed along to make perfect cookies with the three ingredients: butter, sugar and flour. In the "Highlanders Cookbook," the following statement is made: "Shortbread is one of the simplest recipes in the world and yet one of the easiest for a poor cook to ruin."

Derrick graciously agreed to give a tutorial lesson in making shortbread to two friends, Allison Friedman and Elizabeth Snyder. At each step of the recipe, she explained how to proceed successfully and mentioned that it is a very tactile recipe.

The recipe:  
» 3 cups flour or more as needed for texture  
» 1 pound butter at room temperature  
» 1 cup sugar  
» Blend together until thoroughly mixed



Allison Friedman and Elizabeth Snyder observe carefully as Valerie Derrick mixes the dough for Scottish shortbread cookies. Derrick recently taught them the intricacies of successfully making the special holiday treats. DIANE K. BERT



Hot out of the oven, Valerie Derrick shows how the freshly baked shortbread looks. DIANE K. BERT



If a special mold is used for baking shortbread, the finished product will be especially attractive. DIANE K. BERT

» Place in two glass casseroles, pie plates or molds  
» Bake at 300°F for 45 minutes to an hour

Here are the detailed suggestions Derrick added as she made the recipe:  
» Place all of the but-

ter and sugar in the mixing bowl, just add half of the flour.

» Mix until blended, add remaining flour. Feel the dough. It should be resistant and not feel moist. Add more flour, perhaps ½ cup. Dough will pull away from the

sides of the bowl.

» Grease the glass pie plate, pat down the dough with flour on your hands.

» Prick with a fork.  
» Place in the center of the oven.

» Do not double the recipe, begin again with a second batch.

» After 45 minutes in oven, tap with finger. If leaves a dent, bake longer. Top will be golden brown.

» Remove from oven, place on a cooling rack.

» Run knife around edge. After cooling invert on flat surface and cut into squares.

» After the cookies are cool, place them in an airtight container.

The aroma of baking shortbread is wonderful, making the observers eager to sample the baked masterpieces.

After completing the lesson, both Friedman and Snyder were delighted to learn the basics and the finer points of successfully making the recipe.

"The ingredients are so simple, but the process is complex," Snyder said. "I will definitely try to make shortbread. It is such a treat."

"The whole experience took me back to my own Scottish heritage," Friedman said. "Now I can pass it along to my daughter and sister. I've got the ingredients and I am ready to proceed. It is an art form. Valerie was so gracious in teaching us."

Derrick's oldest son always says, "I'll see you at Christmas and bring shortbread!"

Now perhaps, many more families may benefit from Derrick's kindness and thoroughness in passing along the Scottish tradition of making shortbread cookies.

Diane K. Bert is a Bloomfield Hills resident with a Ph.D. in educational psychology from Wayne State University. She's a regular contributor to the *Birmingham Eccentric*. She can be reached at [dkbert617@gmail.com](mailto:dkbert617@gmail.com).

## AREA EVENTS

Send calendar items to [LIV-OENewstip@hometownlife.com](mailto:LIV-OENewstip@hometownlife.com). Items must be received at least two weeks prior to the event.

### Trains at Plymouth library

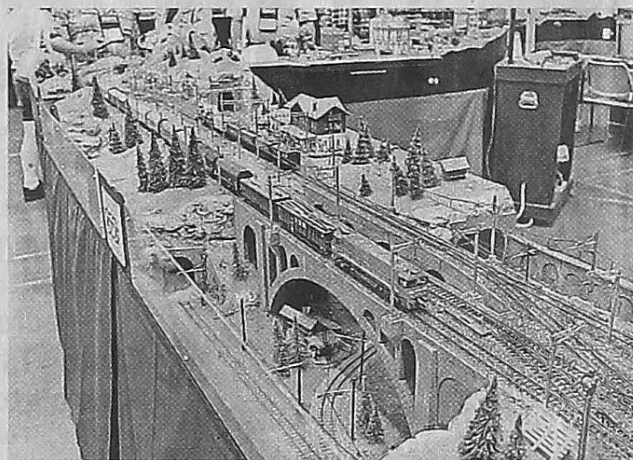
The Great Lakes Chapter of the European Train Enthusiasts will be back at the Plymouth District Library this holiday season, with European model trains running through cities and countryside. The library's main level meeting rooms will house the chapter's expansive collection.

Local resident Jan Eisen is a member of the Great Lakes Chapter of the European Train Enthusiasts and is overseeing the installation of this display. A member of the organization since 2000, Eisen was the owner of Eisenbahn Model Trains, a shop which was located in Plymouth a number of years ago. For more information on the club, go to [www.etegl.org](http://www.etegl.org).

This display is free and open to the public — made possible through the generous support of the Friends of the Plymouth District Library. It will be open 9:30 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 28; 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 29; 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30; and 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 2.

### Village Theater art exhibit

The Village Theater at Cherry Hill will exhibit the collected works of the Ann Arbor Fiberarts Guild in the Gallery@VT through Jan. 1. Works on display include a wide variety of fiber art, such as basketry, beading, bead embroidery, bead weaving, kumihimo,



The Plymouth District Library will host a model train exhibit over the holiday break.

crochet, doll making, dyeing and painting, embroidery, felting, garment design and construction, handmade paper and book art, knitting, knotting, quilting, sewing, spinning, weaving and surface design.

The exhibit is free and open to the public from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, during public performances at the theater and by appointment by calling 734-394-5300. The gallery is closed holidays.

The Village Theater at Cherry Hill is located at 50400 Cherry Hill Road. For more information, call 734-394-5300 or go to [www.cantonvillage.com](http://www.cantonvillage.com).

### Hats for the Homeless

Plymouth Community United Way is gearing up for the annual Hats for the Homeless drive, scheduled to run through Dec. 29 in an effort keep our homeless community warm during the winter months. New and handmade items can be dropped at the PCUW office from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Friday.

Should your company

or group like to participate by hosting a drive on-site or like to sponsor items like coats or blankets, contact Randi at 734-453-6879, ext. 5. For more information, go to [www.plymouthunitedway.org](http://www.plymouthunitedway.org).

### Veterans dinner

The V.F.W. Post No. 6695, 1426 S. Mill Street, in Plymouth will host a welcome home dinner for all veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and their family members 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 7. Membership sign-up for the V.F.W. will be available, as well as hats and pins for sale, music from D.J. Koz, a 50/50 drawing, a tin can basket raffle and door prizes.

All Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, plus one guest, will be admitted free. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for children at the door. All proceeds will go to V.F.W. Post 6695. For more information, call (989) 313-5407 or email [strawjazz@yahoo.com](mailto:strawjazz@yahoo.com).

### PARC community forum

The Plymouth Arts & Recreation Complex will hold a community forum at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at the Penn Theatre, 760

Penniman Ave., in Plymouth. PARC will update the community on its future plans to preserve and re-purpose the historic former Plymouth High/Central Middle School into an arts and recreation center and add a new Performing Arts Center as well as respond to questions.

Everyone is invited to witness the progress made since its inception and share in the vision for the future. Preliminary designs, site plans and renderings of the facilities will be on display and available for public review.

PARC is a 501(c)3 public charity. For more information, contact Don Soenen at 734-516-4053 or [dsoenen@gmail.com](mailto:dsoenen@gmail.com).

### Baseline Folk Society

The Baseline Folk Society continues its 13th season at The JWH Center for the Arts, Plymouth Community Arts Council, at 774 N. Sheldon Road.

Tickets are \$5 at the door, including performers. Sign-up for open mic starts at 6:15 p.m. and ends at 6:40 p.m. Performances are the third Saturday of each month, September through May.

### Music at the Elks

Blues @ The Elks happens 7-10 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month at the Plymouth Ann Arbor Elks Lodge No. 325 in partnership with the Detroit Blues Society ([www.detroitbluesociety.org](http://www.detroitbluesociety.org)). There is a \$5 donation at the door and bring your dancing shoes.

Jazz @ The Elks happens 7-9:30 p.m. the last Tuesday of each month. There is a \$10 donation at the door, which includes hors d'oeuvres.

The Plymouth Ann

Arbor Elks Lodge No. 325 is at 41700 Ann Arbor Road, Plymouth. For more information, call 734-453-1780, go to [www.plyaa325.com](http://www.plyaa325.com) or email [jazzattheelks@gmail.com](mailto:jazzattheelks@gmail.com).

### AARP TaxAide looking for volunteers

Every year, AARP provides free income tax preparation services for seniors and other moderate income families from February through April. AARP is looking for new volunteers to become tax

counselors. You should know how to use a computer and the internet, and be experienced with income tax preparation.

Training will be provided to learn the tax software and tax law, to prepare you for certification. Training classes in mid-January are being scheduled now. Volunteers are expected to be active about one day per week during the tax season.

You can apply by completing an application online at [aarpfoundation.org/taxaide](http://aarpfoundation.org/taxaide) or call 888-227-7669.

## Obits

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

### Mary E. Nagy

HARSENS ISLAND - 74, of Harsens Island, MI., and formerly of Livonia, MI November 23, 2017. Dear wife of John J. Beloved mother of Marlana (William) Witt and Regina (Daniel) Steinert. Dear grandmother of Caroline Witt, Gibson Steinert, and Camden Steinert. Funeral mass 11:30 AM Thursday December 28, 2017 in the Our Lady on the River Parish St. Mark's Catholic Church, Harsens Island, MI. Arrangements by the Gilbert Funeral Home, Algonac, MI. [www.gilbertfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.gilbertfuneralhomeinc.com)



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Each week, this series has introduced you to an exceptional American who unites, rather than divides, our communities. To read more about the American profiled here and more average Americans doing exceptional things, visit [one-nation.usatoday.com](http://one-nation.usatoday.com).

MEMPHIS, Tenn. - Mahal Burr had trouble distinguishing right from left. Her mother put mismatched socks on her to help her learn.

Several years later, Burr, whose mother is white and father Filipino, started wearing different colored socks again for another reason.

"I didn't want to be known as the white girl or the Chinese girl or the Filipina girl," Burr said. "I wanted to choose my identity. So I became known as the mismatched socks girl."

Today, Burr helps seemingly mismatched young people in Memphis choose their own identities and understand and value those of others.

Burr, 27, is community action coordinator for BRIDGES, a nonprofit youth leadership program that helps students build relationships and work for social change across racial, ethnic and income divides.

Burr was building bridges long before she began working for an organization named for them in a Mississippi River city defined by them.

Her given name is a sort of bridge. Mahal means "love" in Tagalog, a language spoken by her Filipino father. It's also short for Mahalia, as in Mahalia Jackson, her Mississippi-born mother's favorite gospel singer.

Burr's families span two continents and multiple faiths, including Muslim, Jewish, Baptist, Presbyterian, Catholic and Quaker, as well as atheist and agnostic.

"I often see myself as a bridge," Burr said. "I believe there is God, good and love in everyone."

Everyone includes juveniles who are in jail awaiting trial on charges such as possession of drugs or firearms, assault, rape or murder.

At BRIDGES, Burr and her colleague,



Mahal Burr, 27, works for a Memphis, Tenn., nonprofit that helps students build relationships and work for social change. JIM WEBER/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Evan Morrison, organized a new and unconventional leadership program called Incarcerated Youth Speaking Out for Change.

The program puts youth detainees in front of police officers, political leaders, church groups, students and others to help them understand the root and systemic causes of youth violence.

"We have to listen to the people who are experiencing those problems firsthand, and involve them in repairing the systems that failed them," Burr said.

It's a lesson she learned as a college intern working with struggling single mothers in Chicago, and as a college graduate working with abused teen mothers in Memphis.

"The solutions isn't what we bring," she said. "It's what we find."

ONE NATION  
Nominate an American

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

MAHAL BURR

Location: Memphis, Tenn.

Age: 27

Profession: Community organizer

Mission: To involve youth in solving systemic problems that affect their lives and futures

Q&A WITH MAHAL BURR

What does it mean to you to be an American?

When I think of being American, I think of shame, struggle and conflict within our country. I think of our country, our government, our identity that claims "American" to mean only the United States and our celebrated patriotic history of white supremacy, genocide and enslavement. And I think of the many people I know, admire and link arms with in fighting systemic racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, anti-Semitism, ableism as well as other forms of oppression. I think America is still struggling to accept all that it is, and I wonder what American would mean if we embraced Fannie Lou Hamer's quote, "Nobody's free until everybody's free."

What moment touched and motivated you to launch this effort?

I know the precise moment. For an hour, the chief jailer had been listening to 18 incarcerated youth share their insights regarding the causes of youth violence and then brainstorm their own solutions. Then the chief jailer spoke. He said to the group, "I have just learned things from you all that I never would have even thought about otherwise." It was in this moment that everyone in the room realized that not only do these young men have insightful knowledge, but also that their knowledge and insights are necessary to strengthen the systems that failed them.

What gives you hope or what concerns you?

The more I know, the more concerns I have and the more I realize how much needs to be done, if we hope to dismantle systemic oppression that causes so much brokenness in our country: youth being kicked out of schools into prisons; racial hatred and violence; sexual objectification, abuse and discrimination. All of these and more are supported by systems in our society, and we have the responsibility to dismantle them to build something better. What gives me hope is when people come together across experiences, age, socioeconomic class, race and even jails bars and begin listening, valuing and acting on their combined knowledge for a collective good.

What do you hope to accomplish through your efforts?

My hope is to create a mechanism by which we get the insight of firsthand experience at the table to crafting solutions to systems that are oppressing marginalized people in our society. Right now, those in charge of our government, jails, law enforcement and schools are like doctors who do not listen to the voices of their patients. In the words of one of the incarcerated young men as he spoke to the youth of our city, "We need solutions that include the insights and knowledge of people who have experienced the problem firsthand." In my dream world, we would expand the idea of Incarcerated Youth Speaking Out for Change across the country and begin a wave of stronger, more informed and more just government, jails, law enforcement and school systems.

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## Man busted watching porn, fondling himself in his car

**Darrell Clem**  
hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK —  
MICHIGAN

A 34-year-old man was caught masturbating and looking at pornographic images on his cellphone while sitting in his car in a parking lot, a police report said.

The 34-year-old Westland man told police he was doing it because his wife wouldn't approve at home, the report said, but it didn't stop a Canton police officer from

ticketing him for indecent and improper conduct.

The suspect was caught when a police officer patrolling along Canton Center, south of Ford, noticed a car in an insurance company parking lot about 6:40 p.m. Dec. 17, after the office had closed. The officer went to investigate and saw the man holding his cellphone in one hand and masturbating with the other, with his blue jeans pushed down to his hips, the report said.

The man initially told police he was driving home from his job in Ann Arbor and pulled over to rest and urinate in a bottle. Thing is, there was no bottle in the car.

After the officer asked the man to pull up his pants, his story changed and he admitted he had been masturbating, saying his wife wouldn't approve at home.

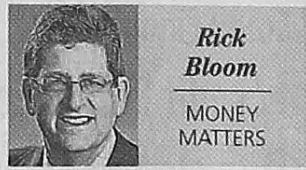
*dclem@hometownlife.com*  
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734-972-0919

## Don't fret about 529 Plan — it's a great gift for children

**Q: I have a couple of questions I hope you can help me with. A number of years ago, I bought a 529 Plan for my grandson. Sometime next year, he will start needing some of the money. I was told by the 529 company that I can either have them send a check directly to the university or, if I was going to pay, they would send me a reimbursement check. That is the way I'm going to proceed. My question is, what documentation do I need? The 529 company said if I'm audited, it's up to me to have the necessary documentation. My next question is, I was told by a friend that on 529s, if I pass away before the money is used, my grandson loses the money; is that true?**

**A:** First of all, congratulations on helping your grandchild through college. I think helping someone with their education is a wonderful gift and something that will help them the rest of their life. College has gotten ridiculously expensive and anything parents and grandparents can do to help share the burden is money well spent.

With regard to documentation, it's like most things in our tax laws — if you are audited by the IRS, is it up to you to prove the deduction. In the case of 529 Plans, if you are audited by the IRS, it would be up to you to prove that the money was spent for a qualified education expense. A qualified education expense is basically tuition, fees, books and other education-related expenses. If you're using the money from a 529



**Rick Bloom**  
MONEY MATTERS

Plan to pay tuition, a statement from the university would be sufficient. If the money was for books, a receipt from the bookstore would be sufficient. You need receipts to show that the money was spent for a qualified education expense.

Documentation to show expenditures for a 529 Plan is no different than documentation you would need to prove a charitable contribution. You don't send the documentation in with your tax return, but retain it in your files in case the IRS wants to see it. Obviously, the more documentation you have, the better it is.

With regard to what happens to the 529 upon your death, whoever told you that you would lose the money is absolutely wrong. What happens upon your death is your 529 Plan continues to exist. The only difference is who the trustee of the plan is. Currently, you are the trustee and, more likely than not, when you established the plan you named an alternate to take over in your place. Even if you did not name an alternate, your grandchild would still not lose that money for college. What I would recommend is to contact your 529 Plan to make sure that you've named an alternate. If not, it can provide you the paperwork to name one.

529 Plans are an excellent way to save for a child's or grandchild's college education. The

beauty of these plans is that, when money is withdrawn for a qualified education expense, the money is withdrawn tax-free. It allows you to save for a loved one's college education on a tax-free basis.

Not all 529 Plans are the same. Some plans are state-specific, which means you can only use them for higher education in those states. Other plans allow you to use them for any public or private institution in the country. In today's world, where flexibility is the key, I recommend the plans that give you great flexibility and allow you to use the money throughout the country. Also what distinguishes plans is the cost involved. Some plans have higher costs and commissions, while others are commission-free. I like the plans that are commission-free, because it means more money is going toward your loved one's education and not into the hands of others. In Michigan, you can buy a Michigan Education Savings Plan directly and have very low fees or you can go through a financial adviser and pay much higher fees.

529 Plans generally have very low minimums and you're not required to make ongoing gifts. If you're looking at making a gift that will make a difference in someone's life, a contribution to a 529 Plan is a wonderful choice.

Good luck!

*Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial adviser. His website is [www.bloomassetmanagement.com](http://www.bloomassetmanagement.com). If you would like him to respond to questions, email [rick@bloomassetmanagement.com](mailto:rick@bloomassetmanagement.com).*

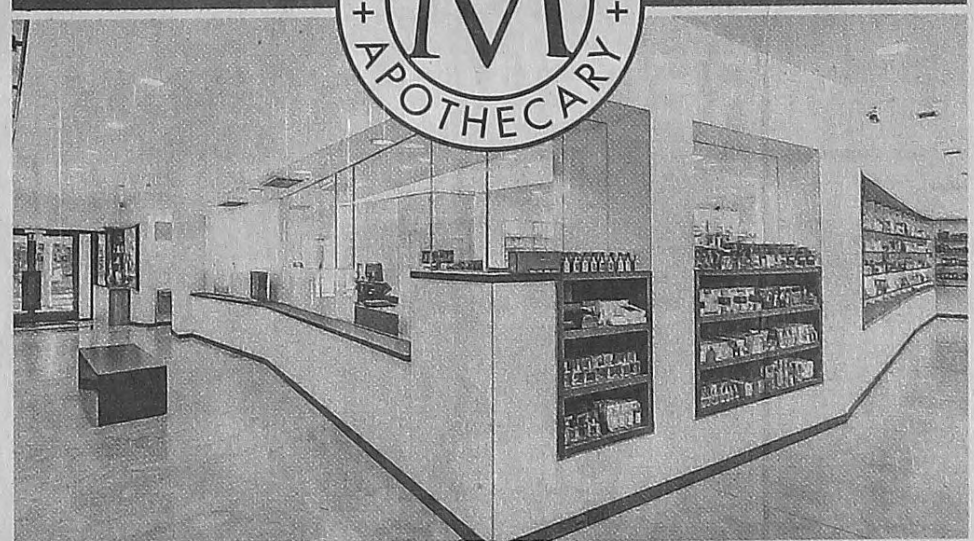
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COLLEGE SOCCER

## National spotlight shines on Ocelots duo

Churchill grad Wynns, Sadler nab NJCAA All-America soccer honors

**Tim Smith**  
hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Back in the day, Lauren Wynns started kicking a soccer ball somewhere in Livonia.

Around that same time, on Jamican soil, so did Hakeem Sadler.

Neither Wynns nor Sadler could have envisioned the success they would someday have on the soccer pitch, particularly for Schoolcraft College in 2017. Their efforts were instrumental in the women's and men's teams both enjoying mammoth success.

Both recently were named National Junior College Athletic Association All-Americans — with Sadler a first team selection and Livonia Churchill alum Wynns a second team choice.

"I was confused, I saw it on Twitter," the 19-year-old Wynns said about her All-America selection. "I was really

shocked."

The sophomore forward for the Lady Ocelots did give props to Sadler, a midfielder who was a catalyst in the run to the NJCAA Division I championship game.

Meanwhile, Sadler's Ocelots went 18-1-0, capturing Michigan Community College Athletic Association, Region XII and district titles along the way.

"Yeah, Hakeem, he's really good," Wynns said. "I'm really happy he got it."

**Lofty praise**

Striking a similar tone was Sadler, a sophomore who scored 11 goals in his lone season with the Ocelots after transferring from Owens Community College in Toledo, Ohio.



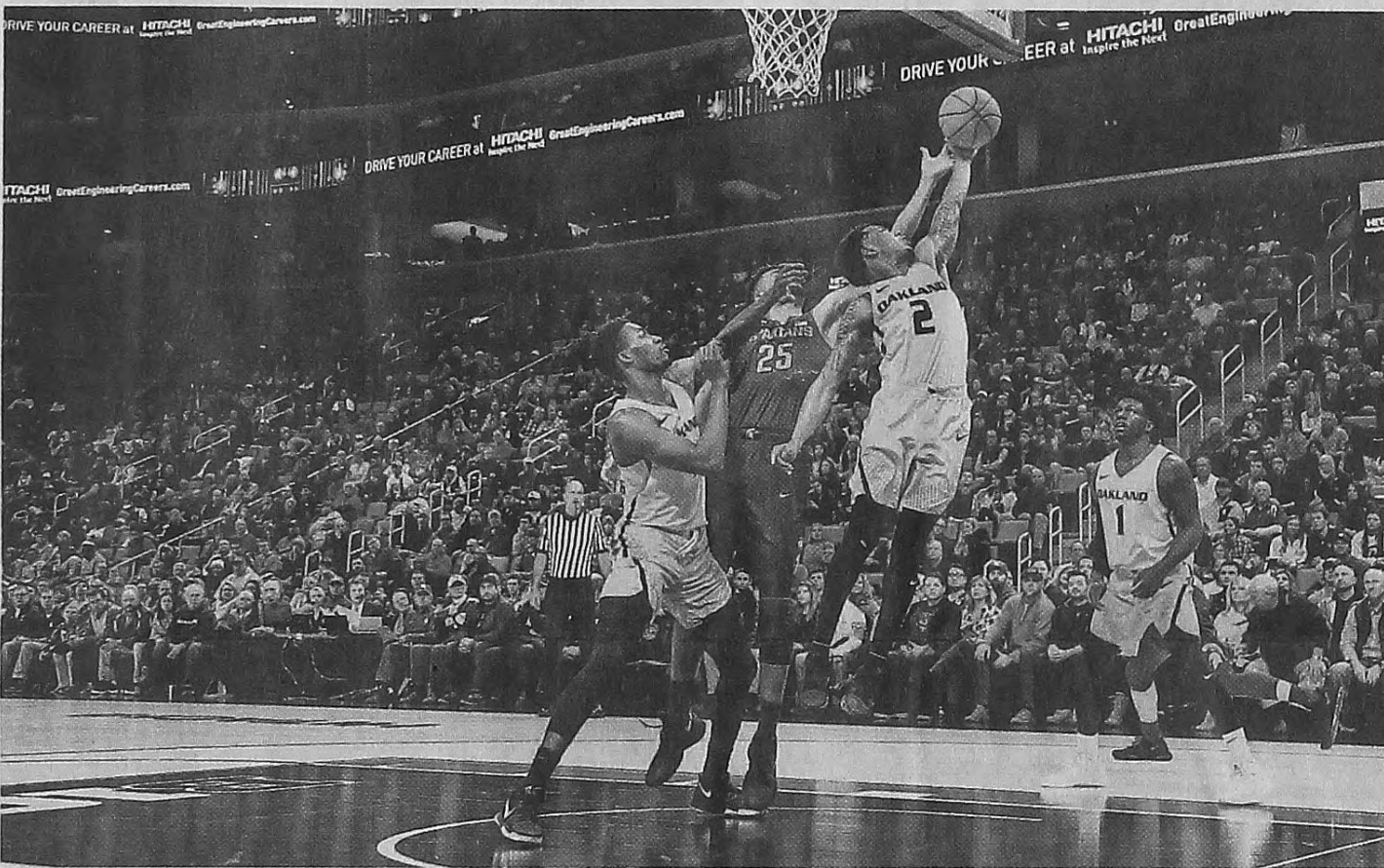
Wynns



NJCAA first team All-American Hakeem Sadler (right) of Schoolcraft College shows his agility during a game this season. SCHOOLCRAFT ATHLETICS

See NATIONAL, Page B2

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL



Oakland's Nick Daniels (right) battles for a rebound with Michigan State's Kenny Goins during the first half of the College Basketball Showcase. JUNFU HAN | DETROIT FREE PRESS

## HE PROVES HE BELONGS

John Glenn alum Daniels makes Golden Grizzlies threat in Horizon League race

**Brad Emons**  
hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Nick Daniels didn't need any help from match.com, but playing basketball for Oakland University has proven to be the perfect marriage for the fifth-year senior guard.

The 6-foot-1, 175-pound lefty earned his seventh start of the season Dec. 16 against No. 2-ranked Michigan State as part of the Hitachi College Basketball Showcase at the new Little Caesars Arena in downtown Detroit.

Daniels played 37 of the 40 minutes for the Golden Grizzlies (6-5) in the highly-charged, highly-competitive meeting against the Spartans (10-1), who broke open a close game down the stretch for an 86-73 win.

Daniels finished with seven points,



Daniels

six assists and two steals before a record and raucous crowd of 20,695, the largest attended event so far in the brief history of LCA.

"You had a lot of Michigan State fans, but it was a great atmosphere and I was glad to be in that atmosphere," said Daniels, who was announced during the pregame introductions as "Nicky D." "We played hard and it just shows how good we are when we're all clicking on the same page. We played as hard as we can and we didn't give up."

Oakland, getting a game-high 32 points from senior guard Kendrick Nunn, appeared poised to break its 0-15 record against MSU before being outscored 18-5 down the stretch.

The Golden Grizzlies stayed within striking distance by executing a simple game plan against the deeper, bigger and more talented Spartans.

"Just keep boxing out and don't let them get the offensive rebounds," Daniels said. "That was the main thing and pretty much getting stops and valuing the ball."

So far this season, Daniels has averaged a career-best 9.0 points per game and has scored in double figures four times, including a season-high 21

*"It's just been amazing being there at Oakland. They've treated me very well. It's been great watching me grow up at Oakland."*

**NICK DANIELS**  
Westland John Glenn graduate

(matching his career best) in a win over Texas Southern.

He is shooting 37 percent from 3-point range and 71 percent from the foul line.

"I wanted him to be the sixth man of the year in the league, but he's played so good that I had to put him in the starting lineup and he's playing great for us," OU coach Greg Kampe said. "He's shooting the ball well. He's the heart and soul of our team."

After red-shirting his freshman year due to a broken foot, Daniels has appeared in 108 games for the Golden Grizzlies, starting 38.

See DANIELS, Page B3

BOYS HOCKEY

## MIHL-KLAA Challenge helps junior scouts find talent

Hockey evaluators come to Livonia for full day of games, discovery

**Tim Smith**  
hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

When junior hockey scouts filed into Livonia's Eddie Edgar Arena for the debut MIHL-KLAA Challenge Showcase on Dec. 16, they were handed a thick booklet listing all teams and players to watch.

"Heady player with good motor," was the booklet's entry for Salem senior forward Tyler German. An entry about Livonia Stevenson senior goalie Will Tragge called him "a tireless competitor" who "oozes hockey."

Although it's handy to have a quick reference — especially with 10 boys high school games to view, not including a "bonus" morning game between KLAA teams Livonia Franklin and Grand Blanc — scouts such as metro Detroit-based Jon Frantti already are well on the way to having their own chapter and verse about everyone from blue chippers to so-called diamonds in the rough.

Frantti, a scout for the Fairbanks (Alaska) Ice Dogs of the North American Hockey League (a Tier II junior league), said any notes and observations at the showcase would quickly be plugged into his home database.

**Work in progress**

With that, he can maintain "a running tab" on players throughout the 2017-18 season.

"That's because a particular player could look really good one day and the next time you see him he may not be as good," Frantti said. "You definitely need multiple viewings."

He said he would be looking for players with compete level, first and foremost. Other top traits include hockey IQ, skating ability and good hands.

Concurring was Zack Bargy, a scout for the NAHL's Minnesota Wilderness,

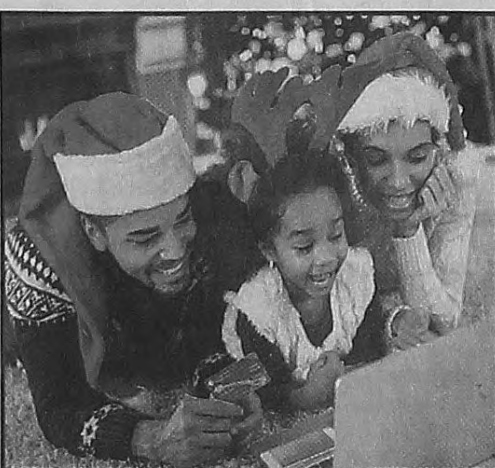


Frantti



Bargy

See CHALLENGE, Page B2



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## BOYS HOCKEY

## Birmingham wins again; Farmington United falls in OT

Marty Budner

hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Birmingham Unified skated to a 3-0 first-period lead Dec. 14 and maintained that advantage the rest of the game for a 7-4 victory over Clarkston at the Detroit Skating Club in an OAA White Division match-up.

Andrew Beggs led the way as the Kings' lone multiple scorer. Andrew

Siver, Brett Hutchison, Samuel Googasian, Daniel Zalesin and Will Sanders accounted for the other BU goals.

Nick Lamb, Lucas Bayagich, David Breugh, Dane Hamilton (two), Matthew Bachand, Beggs and Zalesin were all credited with assists.

Gabriel Barish was the winning goalie.

Clarkston scored twice in both the second and third periods.

**MILFORD 3, FARMINGTON UNITED 2**

(OT): In non-league action at the Harland Sports Center, host Milford needed overtime to overtake Farmington United.

Milford held a 2-1 lead after the opening period and the Flyers scored once in each of the first two periods. The teams played a scoreless third before the Mavericks won it in the extra session.

Milford's three goal scorers were Tyler Conklin, Mitchell Balaka and Ben

Kozar. Blake Maddalena accounted for both the Flyers' goals.

Hunter Bartholomew played in the net for the Mavericks, while Colin Woods was between the pipes for the Flyers.

Farmington United also recently fell to Rochester and Rochester Hills Stony Creek, both by a 6-3 score.

mbudner@hometownlife.com

## NATIONAL

Continued from Page B1

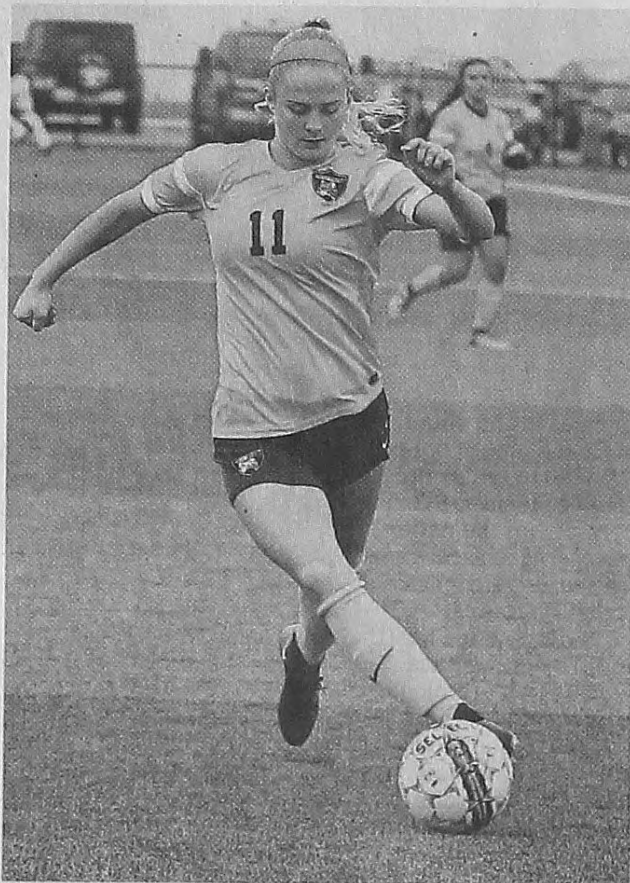
"It was good; congrats to Lauren, also," Sadler said. "It's a cool accomplishment for both me and Lauren and also the school."

The last time both Schoolcraft teams were honored with an All-America player was in 2015. That year, honorees were forwards Victor Contreras and Shae van Gassen (both making the second team).

"Hakeem worked during the season to understand what the expectations of him were and how to actualize his potential," said Rick Larson, veteran head coach of the Schoolcraft men's program. "He influenced this team in so many ways and one of those was to allow his teammates to believe we could."

"Hakeem simply had the best postseason run of any player I've coached here at Schoolcraft College."

Sadler, who lives in Canton, cited a two-goal game Nov. 15 against



Controlling the ball during a game this season is Schoolcraft College sophomore forward Lauren Wynns. JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Monroe College, during national tournament play, as a personal highlight of the season. That

win lifted the Ocelots into the final four. One of the goals came on a free kick.

*"It was good; congrats to Lauren, also. It's a cool accomplishment for both me and Lauren and also the school."*

**HAKHEEM SADLER**, Schoolcraft All-America player

"It was good. I enjoyed the entire season. We came together as a team," Sadler said. "Especially going into the regional finals and we just kept fighting and going after that. That's what brought us to the national finals. Sadly, it didn't end the way we wanted it to."

## Getting stronger

Wynns's team nearly matched the men's team step by step. The Lady Ocelots were undefeated in conference play, won Region XII and earned a spot in the national tournament. The team's only losses were in that tournament, finishing with a stellar 13-2-1 record.

"This year, we had to adapt to a lot of changes," Wynns said. "We had a new coach (Joe Carver) and we lost a lot of players last year, so here were a lot of new people.

"But we were stronger because we worked through it all together. It was really nice going to nationals again. A dynasty, kind of."

Although winning is in the DNA of both Schoolcraft programs, with a long track record of major success, new state-of-the-art soccer facilities on campus provided an extra lift.

Moreover, benefits of the pristine St. Joe's Sports Dome and adjacent soccer stadium should provide long-term benefits, they agreed.

"I think the new facilities attract a lot of players, because there's just so high-quality," Wynns said. "It's nice incentive to go to Schoolcraft, getting to play in a nice facility like that."

Sadler said Schoolcraft's facilities "let us work on our craft and get better each and every day. So it was wonderful,

to be honest."

## Icing on the cake

The NJCAA All-America honors should help Wynns and Sadler continue their soccer careers; both want to continue playing at a four-year college.

Yet they won't forget the past — how they worked to get to this point of their lives.

Wynns, whose 12 goals was second on the team to Jamila Thombs, first played the sport at age 6 or 7 for the Livonia City Soccer Club.

Then came four seasons with Livonia Churchill. She also played for AC Milan-Detroit, which in June merged with the Michigan Wolves-Hawks Soccer Club.

It all helped her prepare for two big years at Schoolcraft.

"Personally, it's just all my hard work throughout my life in soccer," she said. "I've been playing forever and it's nice to get recognition and that great award."

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## CHALLENGE

Continued from Page B1

also based in Michigan.

"I don't think you really ever have a final opinion, to be honest. You have your assumptions," Bargy said. "But every kid's different. I like to watch a kid four or five times before I decide to do anything."

Bargy said he'd be looking for players with key elements in their game such as "speed, skill, puck possession ... players that fit that mold."

If he finds any players that turn his head, he'd look at schedules and make a return trip.

That doesn't necessarily mean only potential "star players" were on Bargy's must-watch list.

"I think a lot of those blue-chip kids, everyone knows about, they're easy to find," Bargy said. "I take pride in finding those third- or fourth-line guys that are going to help us win."

## Doing their homework

Scouts might drool over players with Dylan Larkin-like speed. Yet slow and steady apparently wins the recruiting race.

"The good programs, teams, coaches and scouts take the body of work into account," said Kyle Zagata, a scout for the Aberdeen (S.D.) Wings of the NAHL.

"And they watch over time, watch how they develop over time."

"We're not just taking them for how good they are right now, we're projecting how good they can be. You definitely want multiple views of a player."

Wearing two hats during the inaugural event (spearheaded by Livonia Stevenson head coach David Mitchell) was Andrew Whiteside, an assistant coach and director of scouting for the NAHL's Wilkes-Barre/Scranton (Pa.) Knights.



During this MIHL-KLAA Challenge Showcase game, Cranbrook Kingswood's Hugh Lambert (right) takes a shot against Plymouth goalie Brendan Olepa. MICHAEL VASILNEK

Whiteside nodded when asked if the showcase between the two top high school leagues in Michigan might be like being a kid in a candy store.

"For sure, there's definitely some gems in the rough in this Michigan high school league," Whiteside said while watching an early afternoon game between Salem and Trenton. "This is my first time watching this level and I'm excited to be here for the day."

He said scouting events such as the Dec. 16 one are crucial in filling needs; he noted that the Knights will be looking to replenish their roster of forwards ahead of the 2018-19 season.

According to Whiteside, he found out about the MIHL-KLAA Challenge Showcase via the scouting software RinkNet, as well as "word of mouth. Some players from Michigan have had success in our league."

## Chance to shine

The stands and corridors of Eddie Edgar Arena were filled with many other hockey scouts, who bounced back and forth from Rink A to Rink B to catch portions of as many games as possible. The starting times were staggered for that reason.

"It's showcasing high school hockey in Michigan and it's an event," Zagata said. "There's a lot of great hockey players in the area and there's a lot of great scouts coming to watch them. At Aberdeen, we've had lots of success with Michigan high school players."

"They've helped our program and we've helped them move on to the next level of college hockey. ... We're happy to see it growing and events like this are great for the game."

Stevenson's Mitchell (whose team dropped a tough 3-2 decision to Orchard Lake St. Ma-

ry's), credited broadcast journalist Sean Baligian (who formerly worked with Pete Krupsky, broadcasting games for the OHL's now-defunct Plymouth Whalers and, later, the U.S. National Team Development Program) for helping the event take root.

"It was something that Sean Baligian and I discussed, doing something like this," Mitchell said. "We threw a date out there and the coaches all got on board with it. It's a collaborative effort."

There was shiny hardware, too. Because MIHL teams enjoyed a 6-4 edge, that league took home the new Challenge Showcase Cup donated by Livonia Trophy.

Mitchell added that the MIHL-KLAA event was put together to supplement the MIHL Prep Hockey Showcase, held each February at Kennedy Ice Arena in Trenton — which he called "our Super Bowl!" — to give players another chance to be seen by scouts.

And that extra look could mean the difference between a player finding a future home in the Tier II junior ranks or not — especially if a player has a shaky game the first time around.

"You hope a kid doesn't come out and (have) a poor performance," Zagata said. "You never want to put that pressure on a kid. That's why I think more of these are needed, so kids become used to them, so they don't put all the weight on one game, because the good scouts will find players. The good teams and players are found. If they're a good player, it's not just this game. They will be found."

## Viable path

The path many players take from high school to college teams travels through the junior hockey ranks.

The "high, high-end talent goes to the USHL," Frantti said, referring to the (Tier I) United States

Hockey League.

"There's a lot of guys that don't make that league that end up in our league that end up with scholarships," Frantti said. "You can look at the website and the numbers speak for themselves."

With the number of elite high school hockey programs in Michigan continuing to grow (Detroit Catholic Central, Brighton, Hartland, among many others), scouts deciding to spend a full day watching games in Livonia was like a back-door tap-in.

"I think there's a lot of talent here in high school hockey, it's definitely underrated," Bargy said. "It's proven every year that there's players."

The showcase helped scouts write the preface in the stories of many young hockey players. The exciting chapters are yet to be written.

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## COLLEGE RECRUITING

## Sacred Heart senior to swim at Kentucky

Marty Budner

hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK —  
MICHIGAN

Caroline Szydowski is a high-caliber competitive swimmer who attends Academy of the Sacred Heart High School in Bloomfield Hills.

Even though Sacred Heart does not sponsor a varsity swim team, Szydowski will attend the University of Kentucky on a swim scholarship.

How in the world did that happen? It's simple.

Szydowski is a product of the nationally-renowned Oakland Live Y'ers Swim Club.

The 18-year-old Sacred Heart senior has been in the Live Y'ers program since age 6. She's elevated her talents to the point where Kentucky swim officials, in particular former Olympian and head coach Lars Jorgensen, were excited to recruit the talented long-distance swimmer.

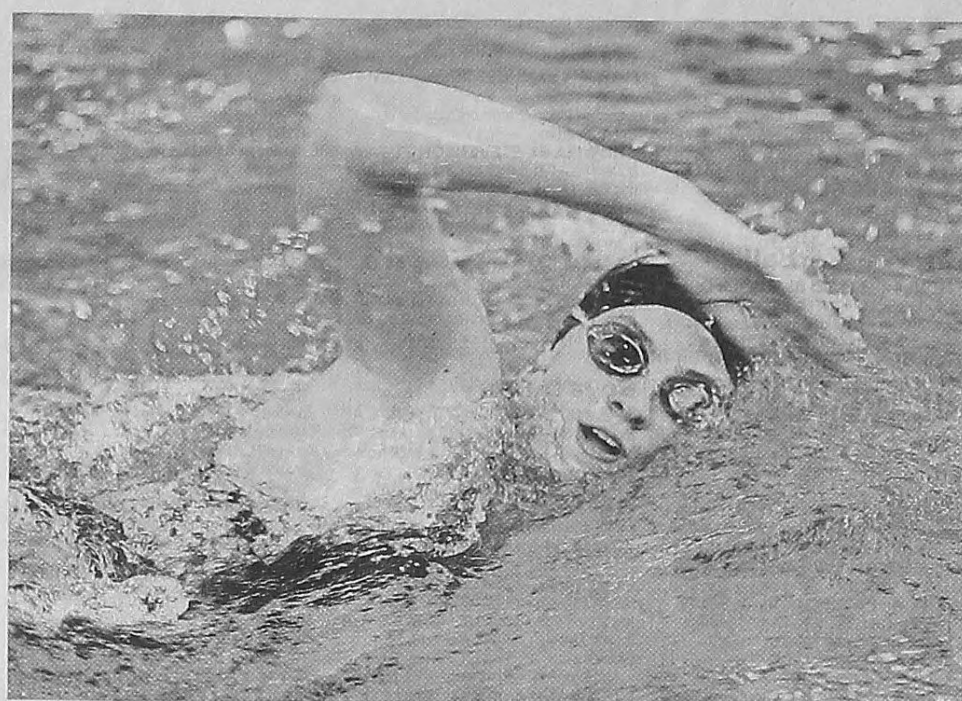
Jeff Cooper, the longtime Live Y'ers head coach, is not surprised.

"Caroline is good enough and her potential is definitely an upside," said Cooper, in his 31st year of coaching, the last 23 for the Live Y'ers. "She is a big, strong girl. She's built like a Division I swimmer."

"I've known Lars for years and he was one of the best distance swimmers in the country," he added. "He's a distance-minded coach, so he knows what her potential is going to be at that level. It's really a good fit for her."

## Falling for the campus

Szydowski said she went to Kentucky on a visit with her parents between her sophomore and junior years and fell



Caroline Szydowski of the Academy of the Sacred Heart is going to Kentucky on a swim scholarship. DAN DEAN | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

in love with the campus.

The Oakland Township resident committed to Kentucky at the beginning of this school year and signed her national letter of intent Nov. 8 at Sacred Heart. She had considered Iowa, Denison (Ohio) University and Miami (Ohio) University, but Lexington was really her heartfelt destination all along.

"I don't know if it was a goal, but I always expected to swim in college, wherever it would be," said Szydowski, who plans to major in pre-med. "Kentucky has a great team with great academics and has a great environment overall. I'm really looking forward to it."

Szydowski said she simply worked hard in academics during the day at Sacred Heart while pursuing her passion for swimming with the Live Y'ers after school hours. She was never bothered by the fact Sacred Heart did not have a swim team.

"I never really paid much attention to it, that we didn't have (a swim team at Sacred Heart), because I was swimming

at OLY all year around," Szydowski said. "It wasn't like I wasn't swimming at all during the high school season."

"OLY is a very elite team, so training with them would very much help me to swim in college," she added. "They work you very hard, so that you're ready for anything."

## Improvement in the pool

As a young swimmer, Szydowski started her career at Twin Lakes Country Club, spent time with the Utica-Shelby Swim Club and ultimately earned a roster spot with the Live Y'ers.

She made her first big splash with the Rochester-based club in the 10-under division, when she was a member of two club-record relays teams (200 medley and 200 free), both of which stand to this day.

As Szydowski advanced through the age divisions, she made constant improvement. By the time she entered Sacred Heart, she began to find her niche as a distance freestyler.

Szydowski now spe-

cializes in the mile freestyle (66 lengths), 1,000 free (40 lengths) and 500 free (20 lengths). Considered one of the nation's top distance racers, she swim the mile in less than 17 minutes.

"You practice for (the mile) by doing pace. You usually don't think about how long it is," she said. "I usually don't look at the counter until it says, like, 60. I don't mind doing that long of a race at all."

If she competed in high school, Szydowski would be one of the state's top 500-yard freestylers (the longest race on the prep circuit). The high school girls season runs from August through November and includes multiple dual meets, a few invitationals and, ultimately, the state championship meet.

The Live Y'ers, by contrast, have a competitive meet roughly every month, including the MCSA Closed Holiday Invitational recently hosted by the Flint YMCA. She figures to again compete in the nationals next March in Orlando as one of the country's top long-dis-

ance swimmers.

"Caroline was a very good swimmer when she was younger. She wasn't exceptional, but she was good," said Cooper, a former 13-time All-America swimmer and team captain at Oakland University. "When she got to be about a sophomore in high school is when she started to come on the scene. She started to train at a much higher level."

"What was happening is that she was getting stronger, getting bigger through our process by laying a big aerobic foundation when she was younger. All of a sudden, you start swimming faster when you get older. The kids start separating themselves as high-level swimmers and start competing at a high level nationally."

"Her strength is that she has a fantastic aerobic capacity," he added. "Much like a marathon runner, Caroline has a fantastic aerobic engine. A lot of that is natural, but she can just maintain a pretty high aerobic pace for a long time. A lot of kids can't do that. It's just a gift she has."

## Prepared by Sacred Heart

Szydowski is not the only Live Y'ers standout who will swim in college next year without having participated on a high school team.

Twins Claire and Lucy Schenden are seniors at Rochester Hills Stoney Creek and will swim next year at Michigan State University. Unlike Szydowski's situation at Sacred Heart, Stoney Creek does have a varsity swim team.

Samantha Ekleberry was not a member of Auburn Hills Avondale's girls swim team, but will take her talents to the University of Toledo.

Justin Glanda, a Rochester resident and 2011 Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood High School graduate, skipped

his first three years of prep swimming while working with OLY. As a senior, Glanda opted to swim for the Cranes and led them to a second-place team finish at the Division 3 state meet, where he was a double individual event (200 free, 100 fly) champion.

"It's very common in our program to have kids go to college who didn't swim in high school," said Cooper, who estimates he's had a minimum of 150 kids attend college at all different levels during his tenure with OLY. "I've been here for 23 years and, more than not, the kids who are getting scholarships are the kids who are with us but didn't swim high school."

"It's not that they don't want to swim high school. High school swimming is great. With Caroline, there was no option, since her high school did not have swimming."

"What's unique for us is our program is designed as basically a five-to-six-year development process," he added. "When kids are in seventh and eighth grade and they come into our program for the first time, that begins the process of where I try to get them to by the time they are 17 or 18 years old — getting them ready to go off to college."

It was the Oakland Live Y'ers program that prepared Szydowski for college athletics. Sacred Heart provided the excellent academic experience for which she will forever be grateful.

"Sacred Heart is a great school," she said. "It really prepares you for a lot. It's really hard academically and it keeps you busy."

Szydowski plans to maintain that same rigorous work ethic she learned at OLY and ASH at Kentucky.

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## GIRLS BASKETBALL

## Marian's big fourth quarter is difference in win over rival Mercy

Marty Budner

hometownlife.com  
USA TODAY NETWORK —  
MICHIGAN

Catholic League powers Marian and Mercy renewed their basketball rivalry Dec. 15 in Bloomfield Hills. Both teams entered with an undefeated record and their first encounter of the season, as usual, featured spirited competition.

The Mustangs, playing their first home game, survived for a 53-46 victory thanks to a ferocious fourth quarter sparked by juniors Megan Kraus and Olivia Moore.

The win kept Marian undefeated at 5-0 overall, 3-0 in the Catholic

League. Mercy fell to 5-1, 3-1 in the league.

"(Both teams) have good kids who work hard and give good efforts," longtime Marian head coach Mary Cicerone said. "It's been a great season for us so far. My kids are working hard and we're 5-0 and who can complain about that?"

"I just think the difference tonight was when Mercy went to a zone in the fourth quarter, we were able to get inside a bit," she added. "My assistant Mike Hawkes drew up a nice play for me in practice and it worked, like, three times in a row. Mercy had to adjust and come out of it and we were able to close

it out."

The game was back and forth through the first three quarters, with seven lead changes and five ties. The Marlins held a slim 21-19 halftime lead and, with both teams scoring 11 third-quarter points, maintained that two-point advantage, 32-30, heading into the final eight minutes.

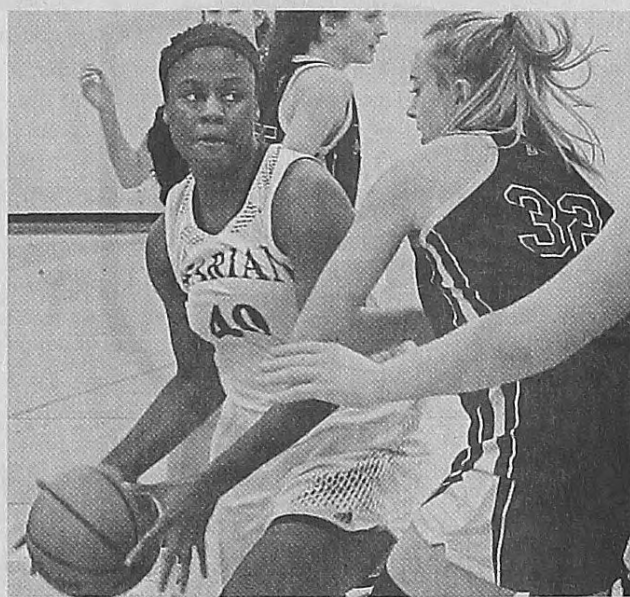
Then the game turned in Marian's favor.

Marian started getting the ball inside against Mercy's zone. The Mustangs scored the first six points of the fourth quarter on down-low baskets from Uche Ike, Kraus and Moore to take a 36-32 lead and never looked back.

The Marlins got within two points twice in the middle part of the quarter, but Marian continued to execute offensively, defensively and at the free-throw line to register the deceiving seven-point triumph.

"It was close all the way and we were up by two points at the half, but I thought we left some points on the board in that first half because we missed some free throws and we had some turnovers that led to some baskets by them," Mercy head coach Garry Morris said. "We had a slow start to the third, but still had a two-point lead. Then we

See MARIAN, Page B4



Marian senior center Uche Ike (left) looks for a good scoring opportunity against Mercy forward Jessica Mruzik. MARTY BUDNER

## DANIELS

Continued from Page B1

During his first three seasons, Daniels averaged a consistent 6.3, 6.5 and 6.2 points per game. As a sophomore, he started 24 games and, in his first season (2014-15), made the Horizon League all-freshman team.

"My role is just being me, just being myself, play the game," Daniels said. "Kampe loves my game. He knows I'm a great player, so just be myself, don't do anything out of the extraordinary. Be a leader on the team, a distributor and shoot the ball. I can shoot the ball real well and that's

what I do."

## He's a favorite

Daniels has evolved into one of Kampe's favorite players, both on and off the court.

"I would tell you I love Nick Daniels and I might love him more than any other player I've ever coached," said Kampe, in 34th season overall at OU and his 19th since the Golden Grizzlies moved to NCAA Division I. "He just loves the fact that he plays at Oakland. He is what I want every kid to be. He's just a phenomenal kid, but he wears his heart on his sleeve. If somebody said you can't play at Oakland ... he'd probably go home and cry. He just loves being



Oakland guard Nick Daniels is introduced during the first half of the College Basketball Showcase against Michigan State at Little Caesars Arena. JUNFU HAN | DETROIT FREE PRESS

here."

And the feeling is mutual for Daniels, who arrived at Oakland as

Glenn's all-time scoring leader and four-year varsity player. Daniels had offers from a couple

of other Mid-American Conference schools, but settled on OU.

"It's been great," Daniels said. "I've seen the growth that I've had. It's just been amazing being there at Oakland. They've treated me very well. It's been great watching me grow up at Oakland."

Daniels will graduate from OU in May. He is a double major in communication and journalism. "I want to be a reporter, like you," Daniels said with a laugh. "I don't know where I'll be, haven't thought about it. I just want to win the Horizon League right now."

Kampe has guided the Golden Grizzlies to the

NCAA tournament three times, the last in 2011.

Daniels would like nothing better than going out in style his senior year by winning the all-important Horizon League tournament, set for March 2-6 at Little Caesars Arena.

Getting to the NCAA tournament would be the ultimate match made in heaven.

"Our main focus is the Horizon League," Daniels said. "I wish we could have won (vs. MSU), but we've got to move forward now. We've got to put it behind us and move on."

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PREP ROUNDUP

# Canton cruises past Livonia Churchill, 82-28

Coaches and team representatives are invited to send game information and story tips to [LIV-sports@hometownlife.com](mailto:LIV-sports@hometownlife.com). Game information will be accepted up to 24 hours after the game ends.

## Boys basketball

**CANTON 86, LIVONIA CHURCHILL 28:** To say the Canton Chiefs are off to a hot start this season would be an understatement, especially after a 58-point win Dec. 19 against the visiting Chargers. Canton, 4-0 overall and 2-0 in the KLA Black Division, got out to a 27-4 lead after one quarter and enjoyed a huge 53-11 halftime advantage.

Six players reached double figures for the Chiefs, led by B. Artis White (16 points), Vinson Sigmon (13 points) and Ben Stesiak (12 points). Helping the cause with 11 points were Chase Meredith and Darius Robinson while Eian Barker scored 10.

Livonia Churchill dropped to 2-3 overall and 0-2 in the division.

**JOHN GLENN 62, SALEM 46:** A 15-point night by Westland John Glenn's Joe Moon IV sparked the Rockets to this Dec. 19 win.

For the Rocks, Jordan Ingram and Amit Tiwari scored 11 and nine points, respectively.

**WAYNE 59, PLYMOUTH 50:** The visiting Wildcats trailed 16-6 after one quarter and could not make up the deficit in a KLA Black game played Dec. 19.



**Salem's Jenna Sydlowski (left) puts up a shot, while Westland John Glenn's Leah Kennedy tries to thwart the bid.** JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO

Isiah Lewis led the host Zebras with 21 points, while Rashad Williams (13 points) and Va Shawn Ward (10) helped the Wayne Memorial cause.

For Plymouth, Anthony Crump registered 21 points while A.J. Neal scored 10.

**STEVENS ON 87, HOWELL 66:** After emerging with a 22-20 lead after one

quarter Dec. 19, Livonia Stevenson pulled away to win this KLA Gold Division match.

For the Spartans (3-0, 2-0), Devin Dunn led the way with 32 points while Parker Graham tallied 19 points (14 in Stevenson's 23-point second quarter). George Ferguson scored 13.

Howell (3-1, 1-1) was led by Jack Palo and Johnny Shields, who scored 26 and 20 points, respectively.

## Girls basketball

**NOVI 44, GRAND BLANC 43:** On Dec. 19, senior guard Ellie Mackay had 17 points, seven rebounds and two assists as the host Wildcats (4-2, 1-1) rallied in the final quarter to down the Bobcats (4-4, 1-1) in a KLA Gold Division game.

Ireland Whalen and Juia Lalain chipped in nine and seven points, respectively, for Novi.

Zada Lacy and Sacha Greene paced Grand Blanc with 16 and 14 points, respectively.

**WAYNE 81, PLYMOUTH 59:** Wayne Memorial senior guard Camree Clegg led all scorers with 28 points and junior guard Jeanae Terry contributed 24 points and nine assists to spark the visiting Zebras (3-2, 2-0) to this KLA Black Division win on Dec. 19.

For Plymouth (3-2, 0-1), Chantal LeDoux scored 24 points and Rebecca Przybylo added 12.

**CANTON 32, CHURCHILL 19:** On Dec. 19 at Livonia Churchill, Ashley Criscen-ti's double-double (11 points, 10 rebounds) was the catalyst for Canton (3-2, 2-0).

Helping the Chiefs' cause with seven points and 10 boards was guard Alaina Heitmeier. Takanta George scored five

points for the Chargers (2-3, 0-2).

"We played some pretty solid defense holding Churchill to just five points in the first half," Canton coach Rob Heitmeier said.

Canton led 10-2 after one quarter and 15-5 at halftime.

**HOWELL 61, STEVENSON 21:** Alexis Miller scored 41 points to carry Howell to this Dec. 19 victory.

For Livonia Stevenson, Sarah Tanderys canned five treys and finished with 17 points.

**SALEM 57, JOHN GLENN 51 (2 OT):** The visiting Rocks needed double overtime on Dec. 19 to get past Westland John Glenn. Salem improved to 5-0 overall and 3-0 in the KLA Black Division.

## Boys hockey

**FRANKLIN 4, GRAND BLANC 1:** A four-goal third period Dec. 20 propelled host Livonia Franklin to bounce back from a 1-0 deficit against the Bobcats.

Scoring for the Patriots (in succession) were Trevor Van Vliet, Hunter Musser, Trey Ziebol and Dakota Keaton (empty netter).

Playing a strong game in net for the victory was Will Augustine.

**CHURCHILL 3, SALEM 2 (OT):** On Dec. 20 at Livonia's Eddie Edgar Arena, Jordan Venegoni scored at 5:06 of overtime to give Livonia Churchill the KLA Black Division win.

Also scoring for the Chargers were Zack Vendittelli and Adam Sinclair. Helping the cause with 28 stops was goalie Chris Sergison.

Garnering both Salem goals was Colin Goleniak. Taking the loss in net was Max Van Wert (25 saves).

**HARTLAND 3, NOVI 2:** Josh Albring scored the game-winning goal from Jake Behnke and Kiernan Carille with 11:04 remaining to give the state-ranked Eagles (7-2, 5-0) the KLA Gold Division win Dec. 19 over the host Wildcats (4-7, 1-6) at Novi Ice Arena.

Brendan Tulpa and Behnke each finished with a goal and assists.

Maanas Sharma (from Evan Chippa and Nathan Graff) and Mitchell Grinshpun (power play from Mike Small and Sharma) countered with goals for Novi.

Brett Tome went all the way in goal for Hartland, while Ethan Hunsinger was in net for Novi.

## Gymnastics

**NORTHVILLE 137.725, LIVONIA RED 129.15:** Junior Maria Scavnicky posted a 9.1 on beam and captain Grace Jankowski added a 9.05 on the uneven bars as the Mustangs opened their dual meet season with a KLA victory Dec. 19 at Livonia Churchill.

**CANTON 133.825, VASSAR 123.6:** Zoe Graves registered firsts on uneven parallel bars (8.65), floor exercise (8.7) and all-around (8.4) as the visiting Chiefs prevailed on Dec. 16.

Also with solid showings for the 3-1 Chiefs were Annika Wang (first on balance beam with a 9.1), Katherine Najduk (first on vault, 8.85) and Rachel Socha, who took second on four events (including 8.675 on beam and 8.5 on floor).

## Wrestling

**REDFORD UNION DUALS:** Northville improved to 9-3 overall after sweeping the

field on Dec. 16 with a 5-0 record to win the title including wins over Garden City (66-15), Livonia Clarenceville (63-18), Lutheran High Westland (57-15), Southgate Anderson (52-24) and the host Panthers (42-32).

Among those sporting 5-0 records on the day for the Mustangs included sophomore Brandon Liu (103 pounds), sophomore Grant Gattoni (103), senior Adam Lewis (119), sophomore Nick Gattoni (140) and sophomore Demir Tagani (285), the latter whom sealed the championship with a win against RU.

Meanwhile, senior Joey Nagy (140) added a 4-1 record as he stepped up in a higher weight class along with teammates Parker Dietrich, Michael Merritt, Adam Zakaria and Frank Cozza.

## Bowling

**PLYMOUTH'S DWYER ROLLS 300:** The third 300 game in Plymouth High School history was registered Dec. 17 by sophomore Chris Dwyer at the annual Lakeland Invitational held at Century Bowl in Waterford.

Dwyer threw his perfect game in the second game of qualifying and followed that up with a 256 score to finish with a two-game series of 556. His big day nearly lifted the Wildcats to a tourney championship, but they were edged out by the Brandon Blackhawks.

On the girls side, junior Maddie Harden scored a 266 game and three-game series of 692, becoming the first Plymouth girls bowler to win a tournament high game and series at the same event. Her scoreline was 266-213-213.

## MARIAN

Continued from Page B3

had a lot of defensive breakdowns in the fourth quarter.

"They started going inside and I'm not discrediting what they were doing, but that's also on us. We were just making mistakes defensively," he added. "But overall, I thought it was a good game for us. We have a lot of young players and it was a good learning experience. You'd like to learn from a winning game, but we'll just learn from this game and get back to work."

Following are the game's three stars:

### MEGAN KRAUS

The 5-foot-11 forward, who did not start, came off the bench to finish with 12 points. All five of her baskets came in the pivotal fourth quarter on layups, including a put-back of her own offensive rebound at the 5:48 mark, which gave Marian a 34-32 lead, an advantage it never relinquished.

Kraus, who had her best game of the season, according to Cicerone, had at least three key rebounds in the fourth quarter and a clutch blocked shot with just over two minutes left to keep the Marlins from gaining any type of momentum.

"Megan Kraus played a heck of a game. She rebounded and she was tough," Cicerone said. "She probably weighs 120

pounds, almost six-foot, yet she was tougher than nails in there. Megan was the difference.

"She made some tough shots for us and got a lot of good rebounds and blocked some shots," she added. "She was very good today. I was very proud of her today."

Morris also took note of Kraus's fourth-quarter performance.

"I thought (Kraus) had a huge fourth quarter," Morris said. "She scored, got some great position at times and she got some put backs. I thought coming down the stretch, she was the difference."

### OLIVIA MOORE

Marian's talented third-year varsity veteran matched Kraus with a dozen points, all in the

second half. She helped keep the Mustangs in the lead by making five of her six free throws in the final minute, when the Marlins were fouling in hopes of getting back into the game. Moore was a sparkling 8-of-10 from the charity stripe.

In addition, Moore played a key role in breaking Mercy's zone press, which caused a few fourth-quarter problems but never did manage to change the momentum completely. Moore effectively brought the ball upcourt and found open teammates to break down the press.

"They contained Olivia really well, but she did a great job of running the whole offense, her and Sophia (Mancini)," Cice-

rone said. "But she did a lot of good things for us besides scoring points. They put the hammer down on her, but she broke their press, she helped run the offense and she made some nice passes for easy baskets."

"She usually scores a lot of points for us," she added. "They may have taken her points, but she figured out a way to be a big contributor in other ways."

### BELLA DUGAS/JENNA SCHULTER

Dugas and Schluter, Mercy's senior captains, led their team in scoring.

Dugas finished with a game-high 15 points, including the game's first five points. The 5-foot-11 forward made five baskets and was 5-of-6 from

the free-throw line. Schluter played her usual grinding game as she finished with seven points. Freshman guard Alexis Roberts hit for eight points and freshman forward Julia Bishop added six.

"Schluter has to have the ball in her hands so many times and she was solid just in terms of that," Morris said. "And Dugas was good, too."

Marian was 17-of-23 from the free-throw line and Mercy was 16-of-26. The teams actually combined to make more free throws (33) than field goals (31).

Mercy is off now until Jan. 3, when it plays a non-league game at Plymouth Salem.

[mbudner@hometownlife.com](mailto:mbudner@hometownlife.com)

## PREP ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

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## TREVOR DEGROOT

SWIMMING SENIOR NORTHVILLE MUSTANGS

Northville senior boys swimmer Trevor DeGroot did what he does best to win the Hometown Life Prep Athlete of the Week poll for the week ending Dec. 15.

He finished strong to outlast staunch competition. Such was the case both in the pool and in the poll -- DeGroot tallied 6,957 votes, more than 49 percent of the total 14,121 votes cast.

DeGroot's main competition entering the final "lap" was Canton senior girls basketball player Carli Vaughan (6,021 votes, 42.6 percent). In third place was Livonia Franklin senior boys basketball player Mark Mettie (1,009 votes, 7.15 percent).

**WHAT HE DID:** The Mustang won the poll thanks to a big-time effort Dec. 12 against defending Division 1 champion Birmingham Brother Rice. He swept the 200- and 500-yard freestyles in 1:48.49 and 4:59.34, respectively, to spark the fifth-ranked Mustangs to a 94-91 victory over the Warriors, ranked No. 3 in the state. "For the past three years we didn't beat Brother Rice so I was pretty excited heading

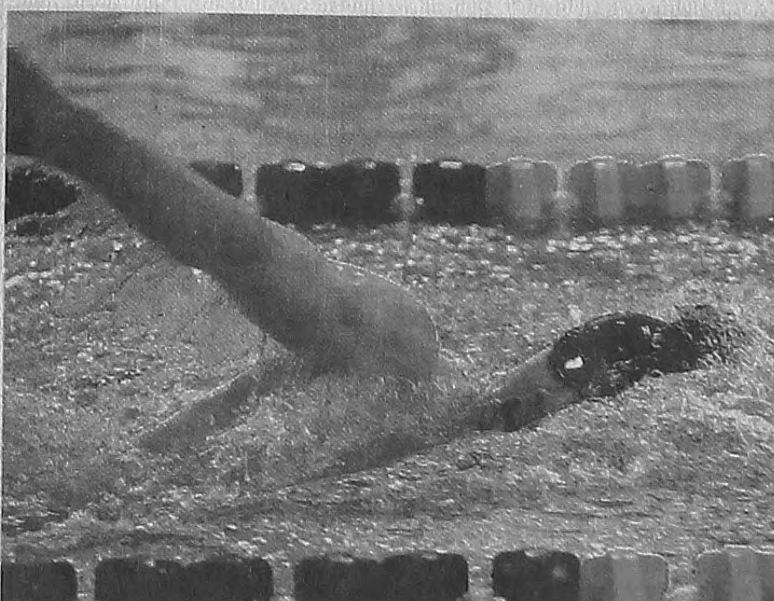
into this one," DeGroot said. "I really tried to focus in on those races and we just had a great team effort all-around." DeGroot said he "just felt good, felt loose in the water. I felt like I had pretty good turns."

**PERSPECTIVE:** Northville coach Rich Bennetts also stressed to the Mustangs not to get too wrapped up in defeating Brother Rice.

"Coach Bennetts told us at the end of the meet that it was an awesome win," DeGroot said.

"But at the end of the day it was just a dual meet. We have bigger goals than that. It really can't be the highlight of our season."

**ABOUT WINNING AOW:** DeGroot said winning Athlete of the Week is "an honor. I'm happy that people recognized swimming because it's not in the news too often. I'm thankful for that."



To vote for Athlete of the Week, go to [www.hometownlife.com/sports](http://www.hometownlife.com/sports)


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# the job network

YOUR LOCAL JOB LISTING FROM LIVONIA OBSERVER

## You should interview for a job you don't want

BY MICHAEL HOON  
 THEJOBNETWORK.COM

**J**ob hunting is a lot of work, whether you're unemployed or looking while working. You put so much effort into revamping your resume, networking and writing cover letters with the hopes of landing something truly great. And then, after weeks or months of hunting, there's a bite — you're offered an interview. But, you're not excited. At all. Maybe you're waiting to hear back from your dream company. Maybe you're just hesitant to accept anything less than awesome before you've really gotten yourself out there.

You might think the best use of your time is to politely decline and wait for something better to come along. But sometimes it's smart to take the interview, even when you already know you don't want the job. Here are some reasons why:

**You might find you do want the job.**

The job you don't think you want might turn out to be a perfect fit. Part of the interview process is for the company to sell you on the position (not just for you to sell yourself). Go in, see the workplace and let them woo you. Find out about the company culture and meet



GETTY IMAGES

your potential coworkers. On paper, it's difficult to get a sense of what the day-to-day of a job will be like. In person, your perspective might shift.

**Practice makes perfect.**

The more you get used to putting on your most professional clothes, signing in at an unfamiliar front desk and sitting in front of strangers while they ask you about your professional expertise, the better you will get at the entire process. If you're at the start of your career or haven't been on the market for a while, every interview is excellent practice

for the next one you get. You'll get your anecdotes down pat and start to get a sense of the questions managers in your chosen field ask at your level. You'll want to be as sharp as possible for the interview you'll get for your dream job. Get all the kinks out when the stakes are low and you're not buzzing with nerves.

**You might meet someone to connect with down the line.**

It's also always possible that you will meet someone in the course of interviewing who can lead you to your dream

job. First, if you get an appointment with a recruiter, they often interview for multiple positions — and sometimes at different companies. You never know what networking wins you might rack up — he or she will keep you in mind for future opportunities.

Second, if you make a great impression but ultimately turn down the position, you now know a face and name at the company. Maybe for your next move you'll want to touch base to see what's open. You can absolutely do so if you rock your interview — even if you don't take the job.

**You can use an offer for leverage with other companies.**

Say you really want job X, but they're dragging their feet in making decisions or final offers. Maybe you're even on a third or fourth round of interviews. But you've also interviewed for jobs Y and Z — and both have made offers.

Now you can go back to X and tell them other companies are vying for you. Don't be too forceful or demanding; just be truthful.

You can politely tell them you have other offers on the table and ask about their decision timeline. Being in demand is always a desirable trait.

Bottom line: Be careful not to waste your time, especially if you're still working full time and have to leave the office for interviews.

If you know there's no possible way you want to work at a certain company or in a specific position, don't take the interview.

But, in general, keep an open mind — you never know how it might play out.

*Michael Hoon is a career advice journalist for TheJobNetwork.com, where this article was originally published. He investigates and writes about current strategies, tips and trending topics related to all stages of one's career.*

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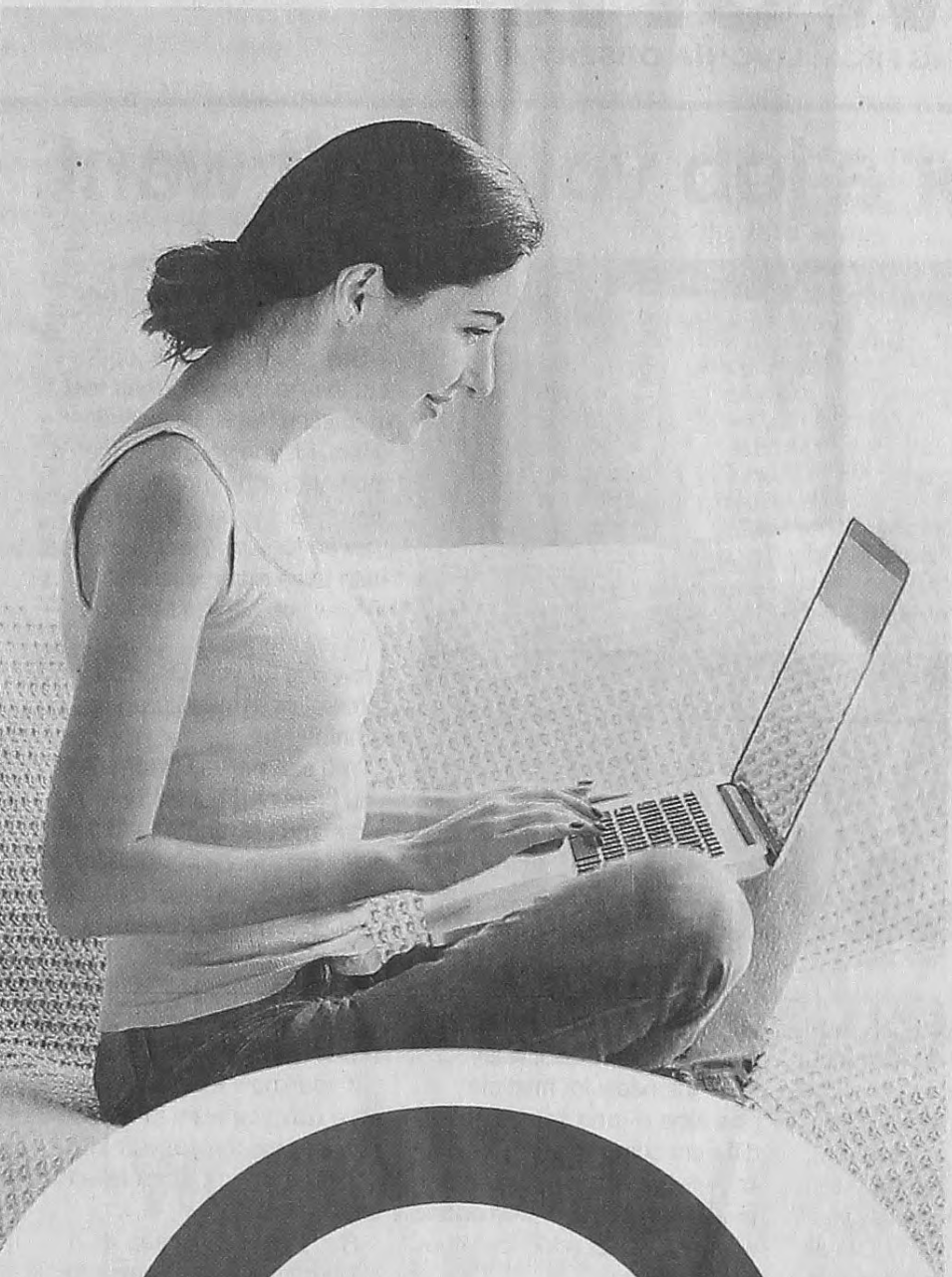
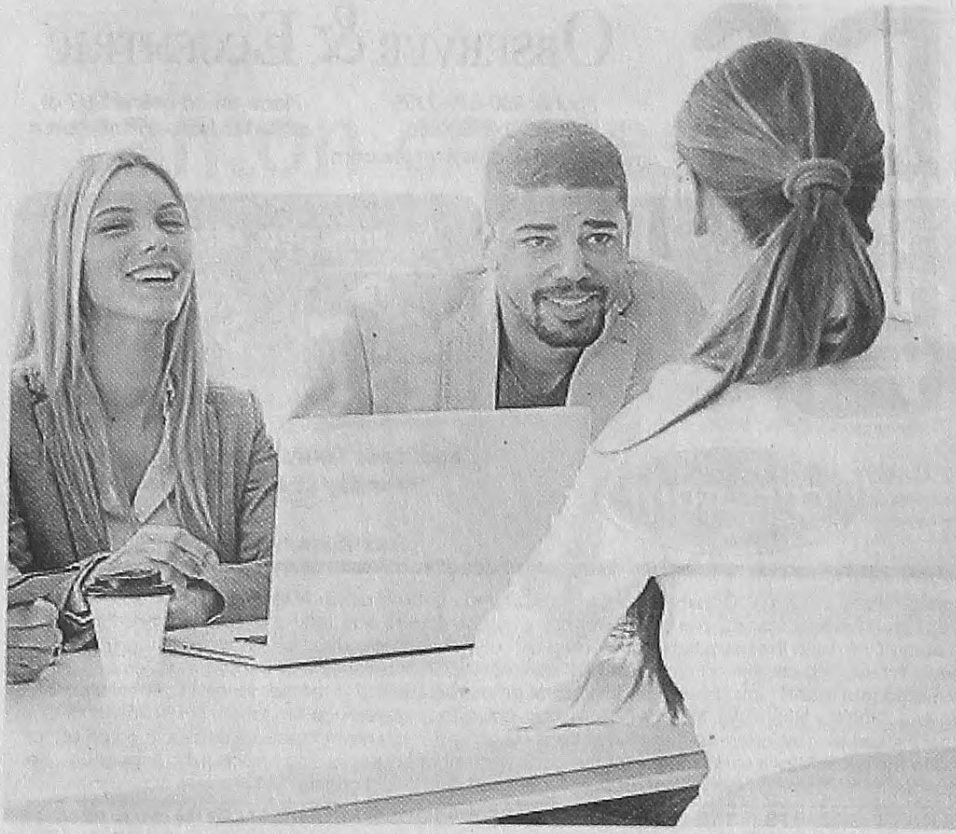
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# SUNDAY PUZZLE CORNER

## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS**
- 1 Wall St. whiz
  - 4 Capote, informally
  - 7 Milky gemstones
  - 12 "Avatar" actress Zoe
  - 19 1,760-yard footrace
  - 21 Juliet's lover
  - 22 Big name in hair care
  - 23 Puzzled
  - 24 Shy around all of humanity?
  - 26 Adorn big shopping centers?
  - 28 Letters on an ambulance
  - 29 Lavish attention (on)
  - 30 "Ball" —
  - 31 Prefix like "equi-"
  - 32 More recent
  - 33 Transport Kriss Kringle on a small, wheeled cart?
  - 43 Middle name of Mozart
  - 44 Yeats' "The Wild Swans at —"
  - 45 Teen's skin woe
  - 46 Brazil's — Paulo
  - 49 Bulletproof vest material
  - 50 Fastener holding a sleigh linkler in place?
  - 53 Foreman foe
  - 54 Moo —
  - 56 Address with dots in it
  - 57 Tomahawks
  - 58 Takes five
  - 61 Rides that aren't new
  - 67 Debt note
  - 69 Rogers or Acuff playing percussion as a child?
  - 74 Droid
  - 75 Fait accompli
  - 76 Blights
  - 78 Kin of karate
  - 81 Poker player
  - 83 Sow, e.g.
  - 85 See
  - 10-Down
  - 86 Reason you might give for not buying a china plate?
  - 93 Mother of Rajiv Gandhi
  - 96 Chatter
  - 97 Hurry
  - 98 False front
  - 99 With dignity
  - 100 Vacation in Italy's capital?
  - 103 In accordance with
  - 106 Profs' aides in place?
  - 107 Gigi's "yes"
  - 108 Voting place
  - 109 Fancy carp
  - 110 Earliest tune that singer Billy ever wrote?
  - 119 Far off driving one's Ford pickup?
  - 122 Japanese massage
  - 123 Divided into new districts
  - 124 Hindu maxim collection
  - 125 'Bama rival
  - 126 Hypnotic states
  - 127 "Let's roll!"
  - 128 Purview of Gov. Cuomo
  - 129 Dipso
  - DOWN**
  - 1 In — rush
  - 2 Religious act
  - 3 Urban model
  - 4 Horse gait
  - 5 Likely traffic snarl times
  - 6 Opens, as a tomb
  - 7 Sea predator
  - 8 Billiards
  - 9 — nitrate (fuel additive)
  - 10 With 85-Across, "Dig in!"
  - 11 — Canals
  - 12 Gossipy chatterer
  - 13 Hoppy brews
  - 14 Decree
  - 15 Cellphone components
  - 16 Cursor, often
  - 17 "Affliction" star
  - 18 Birch cousin
  - 20 Deer cousin
  - 25 Pianist John
  - 27 Prefix with life or land
  - 31 Big name in frozen drinks
  - 32 Part of NBA: Abbr.
  - 33 Capital of Senegal
  - 34 Brunch dish
  - 35 Luxuriant
  - 36 "Bad" cholesterol, for short
  - 37 Vocal vote
  - 38 Chem., e.g.
  - 39 Multitude
  - 40 Yule drink
  - 41 Not sound
  - 42 Actress Langtry
  - 46 Baseball's Red —
  - 47 Pro
  - 48 Go-aheads
  - 50 Rightful deserts
  - 51 They show certain transit routes
  - 52 Actress Dern
  - 55 Shanty
  - 59 Tim of football
  - 60 — Poke (candy)
  - 62 "Do Ya" gp.
  - 63 Lion lair
  - 64 B-to-F run
  - 65 Suffix with drunk
  - 66 Wish undone
  - 68 Sun or moon
  - 70 "Yes, that guy!"
  - 71 1,051, to Nero
  - 72 Iroquois tribe
  - 73 Per annum
  - 77 Doesn't exit
  - 78 Irish dance
  - 79 Yankee land
  - 80 Small dollop
  - 82 Arboreal frogs
  - 84 In the way a lass would
  - 87 2011 Marvel Comics film
  - 88 Problems for vain sorts
  - 89 Snarling mutt
  - 90 Chart buster
  - 91 "Sorta" suffix
  - 92 — wee Herman
  - 94 "— will not!"
  - 95 Clunker
  - 99 Adds abundantly
  - 100 Swear by
  - 101 C-worthy
  - 102 Polloi
  - 103 In two, say
  - 104 Scatterer of seeds
  - 105 City square
  - 109 Patella locale
  - 110 Certain bolt holder
  - 111 Altitudes: Abbr.
  - 112 Architect Saarinen
  - 113 Drescher of "The Nanny"
  - 114 Lashes (up)
  - 115 Traffic clog
  - 116 Redding of soul
  - 117 Canadian fuel brand
  - 118 Deep desire
  - 120 Company abbr.
  - 121 "— was saying ..."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19			20					21			22							
23								24			25							
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78	79	80			81	82					83		84			85		
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119					120				121					122				
123									124					125				
126									127					128				129

For assistance or suggestions on the Puzzle Corner, contact Steve McClellan at (517) 702/4247 or [smcclellan@michigan.com](mailto:smcclellan@michigan.com). Want more puzzles? Check out the "Just Right Crossword Puzzles" books at [QuillDriverBooks.com](http://QuillDriverBooks.com)

## SUDOKU

	6				9			8
		5	2					3
4				6		9		
		3		1				6
	1		7					2
2				3		4		
5			1			7		
	3			8				2
		7			6		9	

Here's How It Works:  
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

4	6	8	9	5	3	7	2	1
2	5	1	7	8	4	9	3	6
3	9	7	2	6	1	4	8	5
1	7	8	3	4	5	6	2	9
6	2	3	5	4	7	8	1	9
9	8	5	1	2	6	3	4	7
5	1	6	3	9	8	2	7	4
7	9	4	6	2	1	5	8	3
8	4	2	6	7	5	1	9	3

## RESOLUTIONS WORD SEARCH

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

### WORDS

- BRAIN
- BUSINESS
- CAREER
- CLEANING
- CLUTTER
- CONCENTRATION
- CONFIDENCE
- DEBT
- DIETING
- DONATION
- EDUCATION
- EXPLORATION
- FINANCES
- FITNESS
- FOODS
- FRIENDS
- GIVING
- HABITS
- HAPPINESS
- HEALTHY
- LIBRARY
- MASSAGE
- MEDITATE
- ORGANIZE
- PROCRASTINATION
- RAISE
- READING
- RELATIONSHIP
- RESOLUTION
- RESUME
- SALARY
- SHAPE
- SOCIALIZE
- STRESS
- TRAVEL
- WORKOUT

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally & diagonally throughout the puzzle.

**Crossword Answers**

ARB TRU OPALS SALDANA  
MILEROUN ROMEO CLAIRROL  
ATALOSS COYTOTHEWORLD  
DECKTHEMALLS EMS DOTE  
HAI ISO NEWER  
DOLLYOLDSTNICHOLAS  
AMADEUS COOLE ZIT SAO  
KEVLAR JINGLEBELLOOK  
ALLI SHURRI AXES  
RESTS SUSED CAR S TION  
THELITTTLED RUMMERROY  
BOT DONED EAL BANES  
JUDO STU PIG EAT  
ISAWTHREECHEIPS INDIRA  
GAB HIE GUISE PROUDLY  
ROME FORTHEHOLIDAYS  
ASPER TAS OUT  
POLLKOT THEFIRSTJOEL  
AWAYINARANGER SHIATSU  
REZONED SUTRA OLENTISS  
TRANCES ITSON NYS SOT

**Word Search**

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

# Car Report

## IN FULL-SIZE AVALON, TOYOTA SELLS A SEDAN THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO SWITCH TO A UTILITY VEHICLE



By Dale Buss

It's unfortunate that Americans have been turning away from sedans and turning toward utility vehicles in such a rush over the last few years, because in doing so they may be bypassing great cars like the 2017 Toyota Avalon.

Just like so many sedan nameplates from the subcompact to the full-size like Avalon, this Toyota car flagship has been suffering from consumers' mammoth pivot to crossovers and SUVs. Its sales were down by nearly 28 percent through July compared with a year ago, the worst relative performance across Toyota's sedan lineup.

But what a car folks are missing in the 2017 Avalon. The latest version of the sedan hasn't been updated much since the car was last done over in

2013, but it didn't have to be: Avalon is the optimal vehicle for people who want a large sedan that is going to keep them comfortable, yet in tune to the road, whether they're going on a long-distance road-trip vacation or commuting every day.

Avalon starts at prices of \$33,000, which is on the high end for sedans in its class. But it offers pretty much everything that most folks would want in a vehicle. It's styled far less conservatively than previous versions and even progressively for the boomer target audience.

Avalon sports a powerful 3.5-liter V6-engine that's couple with a six-speed automatic transmission and a well-tuned suspension. It provides 268 horsepower and 248 pound-feet of torque. Yet Avalon is able to get up to freeway speed of 60 mph in just 6.4 seconds.

The car sports a decent 24mpg in combined driving, 21th 21mpg in the city and 30 mpg – very respectable for a big car – on the highway. The EPA's



Avalon's rear seat can make three adults comfortable.

rating of Avalon for fuel economy and greenhouse-gas emissions puts it at a 5 on a 10-point scale, smack dab in the middle.

It's got plenty of room for five adults, including a capacious rear seat. Child seats also fit easily into the rear row. Visibility is great for everyone in the car.

There's also lots of places for interior storage including the center console and side pockets in front and back. Storage cubby holes fit both keys and wallets, and the center console is large. The front section of the console also conveniently acts as a nexus for power cords that pass through a sliding panel for two cellphones and auxiliary and USB connections.

I've always liked Avalon's ample trunk space too, which at 16 cubic feet – with a wide opening and low liftover height on the lip – make it great for loading and holding big and heavy bags, golf clubs, and all manner of other cargo that would be unworkable in most sedans. A ski pass-through and

and handles much better than past generations of the car, with a ride that has firmed up yet which is still easy to command. It's also got luxury-level quiet inside the passenger compartment.

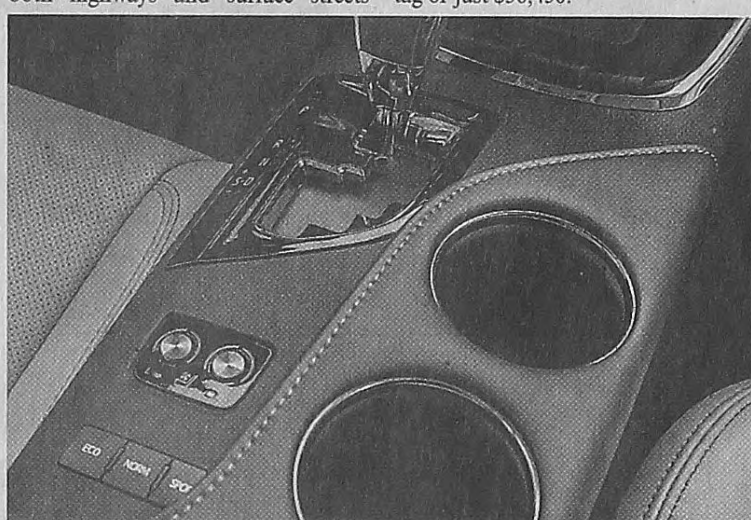
And speaking of the interior, Avalon offers high-quality materials and excellent construction as well as the choice of many high-tech features. Now, for example, Toyota's vaunted safety sense is standard on all Avalons, including adaptive cruise control, a lane-departure warning and intervention system, forward collision warning, automatic pre-collision braking and automatic high-beam headlight control.

Still, I recommend checking out the XLE Plus trim version of Avalon. It provides many safety and convenience features – including a sunroof, heated outside mirrors with turn signals, leather-trimmed heated front seats, and so on – but at a reasonable price tag of just \$36,450.

split-folding rear seats are standard.

It's not quite got the cargo utility of even a reasonably sized SUV, but Avalon's capacity is nearly as close as any sedan can come to that kind of accommodation.

Avalon is very comfortable on both highways and surface streets



Plenty of cubbies, fine trim work



The Toyota Avalon is handsome and in command on the road

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