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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020 | HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Chick-fil-A planned in southeast Livonia

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

As Livonia residents have watched surrounding communities become home to Chick-fil-A restaurants, including Allen Park and Novi, the company

known for its chicken sandwiches and waffle fries now plans to bring the fast food restaurant to the city.

The popular chicken restaurant based in Atlanta, Georgia, brought plans to construct its newest Michigan location on property near Plymouth and

Middlebelt roads in a redevelopment of the Shoppes of Livonia behind the vacant Walgreens building. The request was taken up by the city's planning commission during its virtual meeting Tuesday.

"This is a particular tenant, Chick-

fil-A, that has been requested by many residents in the community," Planning Commission Chairman Ian Wilshaw said. "It's something we hear on a regular basis: 'When is a Chick-fil-A going

See CHICK-FIL-A, Page 3A



Ashley Ewing, of Garden City, stands outside a special place in her journey to recovery: Grace Centers of Hope in Pontiac. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Garden City woman recovering after years of heroin addiction

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Ashley Ewing was a student at Garden City High School when she was first introduced to drugs.

"I started doing drugs when I was like 14," she said. "I started taking pills and smoking weed, and I doing cocaine by the time I was 16. I was fully addicted to the heroin by the time I was 17."

As a teenager, Ewing said, she had a job, attended high school full-time and, to top it all off, was battling a full-blown heroin addiction.

Now 29 and living in Pontiac, Ewing has been clean for a year and a half, but she said the road there wasn't easy. Before going to Grace Centers of Hope, a life skills program in Pontiac that helps people escape abuse, homelessness or recover from addiction, she tried rehab

about 20 times and even spent time in jail.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 14,996 people in the U.S. died of a heroin overdose in 2018. Among students, heroin use has remained relatively stagnant at less than 1 percent nationwide over the last few years.

See RECOVERING, Page 3A

Plymouth Ice Festival plans being carved out

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Plans for a downsized 2021 Plymouth Ice Festival during the weekend coinciding with Valentine's Day are being sculpted by JAG Entertainment, the event's longtime planner.

After the 2020 Ice Festival was shortened by unseasonably warm temperatures and rain, JAG owner James Gietzen said the 2021 event would feature smaller sculptures stationed strategically in front of downtown Plymouth businesses — not in Kellogg Park — to help encourage social distancing.

Gietzen said several hurdles have to be cleared before even a mini-ice festival can unfold.

"First of all, we'd have to see where the spread of COVID-19 is at in Michigan once we get to late January,

See FESTIVAL, Page 4A

Canton mother, son share Pfizer vaccine trial experience

Ed Wright Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Canton Township mother Michelle Hall and her son, Hunter Hall, are among the thousands of unsung heroes in the battle against COVID-19.

Weeks before the Pfizer and BioNTech mRNA vaccine was deemed safe for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Halls volunteered to participate in a 44,000-person trial, the results of which helped determine the vaccine's effectiveness.

Harboring pre-trial feelings that ranged from growing apprehension (58-year-old Michelle) to all-in optimism (22-year-old Hunter), the Halls drove to a Farmington Hills research clinic Oct. 24.

"I was really nervous leading up to the first injection," Michelle admitted while sitting at a kitchen table in the family's Canton home. "Even as I sat in the room in the clinic, waiting to get the injection, I thought, 'I can run out now and they won't even care.'"

"What convinced me to go through with it was Hunter's insistence that this was the safest vaccine I'll ever get. He had just finished his final year at Michigan State University, taking classes like epidemiology and virology, so he knew what he was talking about."

Of the 44,000 volunteers who participated in the Phase 3 trial — a double-blind randomized control trial — half received a placebo consisting of salt water; the other half received the real vaccine.

"The researchers don't know who gets the vaccine and who gets the placebo and the trial participants don't know," Hunter said. "The only person who knew what my mom and I were being injected with was the nurse who actually did it."

"This type of trial is considered the gold standard in science."

Hours after returning home from the clinic, the Halls had a pretty good inkling of which injection they had received.

In the next 24 hours, Michelle developed a mild fever, slight body aches and soreness in her shoulder. Hunter, on the other hand, said he felt nothing after the injection was completed.

See VACCINE, Page 4A



How to handle IRAs, property in divorce settlement



Money Matters

Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

Dear Rick:

This has been a very difficult year for my husband and me. We both lost our jobs and we have both been receiving unemployment. Because of the stress brought on by COVID-19, our marriage has suffered, and as a result, we have filed for divorce.

Because we wanted to save money, we have decided to use the same attorney. The attorney that we chose happens to be my husband's best friend who was the best man at our wedding. He sent me papers to sign, and I'm not sure I should sign them.

My issue deals with the property settlement. My husband and I were married for about eight years and we decided we would split everything 50/50. I showed the papers to my dad, who suggested I contact you.

The issue my dad has is first with our retirement accounts. When we lost our jobs, my husband and I moved our 401(k) plans into our IRAs. In total, we have about \$250,000 in our retirement accounts. Of that,

about \$100,000 is in a Roth IRA and the rest is in a traditional IRA.

When the attorney allocated the money, we each got approximately \$125,000; however, my husband had all the money in the Roth IRA allocated to him, which my dad didn't think was right. The attorney says it didn't make any difference. What do you think?

My second question deals with our home. My husband wants to keep our home and will pay me my share of the equity. I think the number they used for the fair market value of my house is reasonable; however, my dad says my husband should be required to refinance the house to remove my name from the mortgage. Do you think that's important?

Thank you, Barb

Dear Barb:

It is very clear to me that the attorney does not have your best interest at heart.

With regards to the first issue, there is a major difference between traditional IRA money versus Roth IRA money. The dollar amounts may be equal; however, the tax consequences are not.

When you withdraw money from a traditional IRA, that money will be subject to income taxes at your ordinary income bracket. On the other hand, when you withdraw money from the Roth IRA, it is tax free.

In your situation, when you factor in state and federal taxes, you can easily lose a quarter of your money, if not more. If the goal was to split the retirement money 50/50, you definitely got an unfair deal. I agree with your dad, you should not sign those papers.

In your situation, the fair allocation should be that you each get the same amount of Roth IRA money and the same amount of traditional IRA money.

With regards to your home, I once again agree with your dad. Even though the money you are going to receive from the home is fair, what is not fair is that you would still be on the hook for the mortgage.

In other words, if for whatever reason your husband defaulted on the mortgage, no matter what the divorce settlement says, the mortgage company can come after you. After all, you are a signatory on the loan.

Insist that he refinance the house on his own, so that the joint mortgage can be paid off. You should not be responsible for that mortgage into the future.

I believe that you should consider a divorce attorney who would represent you and only you. After all, in a divorce you want as clean a split as possible so you each can get on with your lives.

Good luck!

Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. Email your questions to Rick at rick@bloomadvisors.com.

Boy, 8, dies after shooting in Canton

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Canton police are investigating the fatal Tuesday afternoon shooting of an 8-year-old boy at an Old Michigan Avenue residence.

The boy succumbed to his injuries after the township's 911 dispatch center received a call about a firearm being discharged and the boy being wounded about 4 p.m. The home is near Haggerty Road and Michigan Avenue.

The child was taken to an area hospital.

"It is with much sadness that we report the 8-year-old boy succumbed to his injuries yesterday," Deputy Police Chief Craig Wilsher said in a statement. "An individual is in custody, and we expect to turn our investigation over to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office later today."

Police Chief Chad Baugh is asking the community to respect the family's privacy and to keep them in mind.

Contact reporter Susan Vela at svela@hometownlife.com or 248-303-8432. Follow her on Twitter @susanvela.

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Teresa Corey said her Christmas Village collection, which she's been working on for 34 years, takes up the living room of her Livonia home. COURTESY OF TERESA COREY

Livonia woman shares 34 years' worth of Christmas Village sets

Shelby Tankersley

HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICH.

In 1986, Teresa Corey's mom gifted her the first of what would become her many Christmas Village pieces.

"I went to school to be a legal secretary, so she got a law firm building," the Livonia resident said. "It was made by a company called Colonial Village, which is no longer in business. Colonial Village is hand-

painted and themed, so that's what I started with."

Now, 34 years later, Corey's collection takes up her entire living room.

She covers the buildings' boxes and covers her furniture — even the couch — with the collection that she guesses includes more than 100 buildings. It includes three or four city blocks, and even an ocean that spawns a river.

"I only usually put it up every other year because

it's so labor intensive," Corey said. "So, five years has gone by since I last did it."

Corey said, though it's a lot of work, she wanted to set the village up this year in memory of her parents.

Her father died in March; her mother has been gone 14 years.

She's received many of the pieces as gifts over the years, but has also bought buildings she particularly likes. The two that remind her of her

parents are the most special.

Her favorite is the miniature law office her mother gave her in 1986. It started her on a holiday tradition she's had for years and remains a reminder of her mother.

The other piece that stands out is another early addition to her collection: A little post office. It's always been a reminder of her father, who was a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service.

"My dad passed in March, and my mom and dad were the ones who got me started on it," she said. "So, it was just to honor them. They were the ones that got me into it."

But, this may be the last year she sets it up.

As the years have gone on, the buildings are getting more difficult to find. Corey said Kmart, Ace Hardware, Hallmark and Bronner's Christmas Wonderland used to be where she looked to build her collection.

Now, aside from Bronner's massive offering, Corey said it's easiest to find the pieces at Kohl's, Menards and Facebook Marketplace.

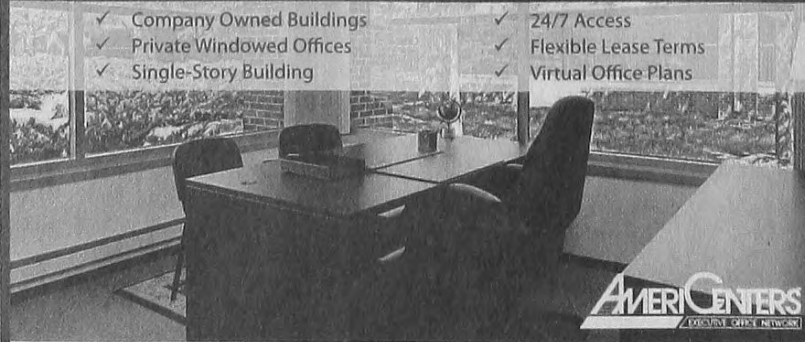
"It's a dying breed, I think," she said. "They're hard to find. Nobody carries them anymore."

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

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Chick-fil-A

Continued from Page 1A

to come into the city?"

With the redevelopment plan, the Chick-fil-A would be located closer to Middlebelt. It would contain enough seats for more than 124 guests inside and 24 guests outside at full capacity. The building would occupy about 5,000 square feet and would have two drive-thru lanes starting at the southeast portion of the building, said Mark Taormina, the city's planning and economic development director.

The fast-food restaurant attracts plenty of loyal fans from across the region. The company has only recently begun to open standalone restaurants in the metro Detroit area, with one opening in Allen Park at the beginning of the year and one in June at the former Denny's site in front of Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi.

Dozens of vehicles are consistently waiting at that restaurant to order food, which caught the eye of Commissioner Peter Ventura and gave him pause.

Given the larger population surrounding the proposed development spanning Livonia, Redford Township, Westland, Dearborn Heights and others, Ventura said it is possible the new restaurant could see traffic issues that overflow onto the main thoroughfares.

He said when he visited the Novi lo-



Chick-fil-A opened by Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi in June. The company now plans to open a location near Plymouth and Middlebelt roads. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

cation the week before, he counted between 70 and 80 vehicles waiting to order food.

He said that number could be far exceeded in Livonia if the proposed new location opens.

"I'm imagining that in the honeymoon period there we could see 200-300 cars trying to get on this site," he said. "And I don't know where you put them."

He said he hoped to have more information from other governmental agencies responsible for the surrounding

roads, including Wayne County for Middlebelt Road and the Michigan Department of Transportation for Plymouth Road.

In addition to a traffic study with recommended improvements, one thing benefiting the proposed restaurant when it comes to traffic is the property's size, said Justin Lurk, principal development leader for Chick-fil-A.

More vehicles could queue up until the initial surge ends, he said.

"I can't think of another Chick-fil-A in our portfolio that we had seven acres to

work with," Lurk said. "I think that's one advantage to this location."

Another Chick-fil-A is scheduled to open sometime in January along Haggerty Road in Northville Township, and a third new location has been proposed in Canton Township along Ford Road.

In addition to the Chick-fil-A restaurant, the entire complex would see a facelift: a new outlot building would be constructed closer to Plymouth Road, and part of the strip center that's currently there would be eliminated to make room for Chick-fil-A.

Frank Jarbou, president and CEO of Orchard Lake-based Symmetry Management, which owns the property, said it would complete the development in three phrases.

It's hoped the Chick-fil-A could open by the end of the summer next year, while the entire development could be completed within 18 months.

"Our full intention is to get this done as soon as possible," he said. "We're aggressively marketing this development."

That building facing Plymouth Road could have multiple tenants or it could have one tenant, Jarbou said.

After receiving a unanimous vote for recommended approval, the project will now go to the city council for its review and final determination.

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

Recovering

Continued from Page 1A

"It's horrible. It's exhausting," Ewing said. "It's so hard to deal with the addiction itself and if you have mental illness feeding into it, it's so much worse. You lose yourself. You lose who are."

"I've been clean for about a year and a half now, and I'm still getting used to being the person I was before I got into the drugs."

Ewing said the longevity of Grace's free program, which is faith-based and can last about one year, made a difference. She had attended 30-day programs in the past that weren't necessarily the best option for someone who had

battled addiction for as long as she had.

But then, Ewing had a son just before doing some jail time. Now 2½ years old, he gave her the push she needed to join a long-term recovery program.

"No one is going to get clean from heroin or other drugs in 30 days," said Kent Clark, CEO of Grace Centers of Hope and a pastor. "I've been here about 30 years now, and this is the oldest and largest shelter in the state of Michigan. We're not a flop house. We don't lock people up and give them some food, like a prison-type thing."

"This is long-term care."

Clark added the faith-based approach of what Grace does, in his opinion, makes all the difference.

"A hurting heart needs inward work, and only God can do that," he said. "We

believe that's through the gospel of Jesus Christ. We've seen tremendous success of that happening and people getting their lives back."

Ewing spent a year in Grace's recovery program, entered its two-year after-care program and eventually regained custody of her son. She's also looking forward to pursuing a degree in business management.

"Once I got my son back, I pretty much knew that I could achieve anything," she said. "For me to stay clean for as long as I have and to get my son back was everything for me."

During a pandemic in which, according to the Centers for Disease Control, substance abuse and mental health decline are on the rise, Ewing said addiction can keep a vise-like grip on some-

one, and it's important to seek help.

"I know it's hard to sit there and watch someone you love and care about go through that, because I've gone through that, seeing my friends do it," she said. "One thing I want people to know (is that) them acting on their addiction is not about their family and friends. It's not that they don't love you, or care about you."

"Addiction is a very strong, conniving thing to go through."

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's national helpline can be reached at 1-800-662-4357.

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

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Festival

Continued from Page 1A

which would be the time when we would need to seek a permit," Gietzen said. "Secondly, the Plymouth City Commission would have to approve a special-event permit with the changes we are looking for. We'd also need to secure enough sponsors to make it viable. "As it stands now, our goal would be

to have approximately 50 smaller sculptures spread throughout the city, without placing any in Kellogg Park, to prevent large gatherings of people. We would promote it as more of a local event than a regional one. It would be a way to get a smaller number of people to downtown to help the businesses during a time of the year when they normally don't get a lot of visitors."

Gietzen said preliminary talks with community leaders regarding the event have been constructive, but there are

still a lot of unknowns involved.

"We're trying to adjust to the situation with a limited time to do it," Gietzen said. "Ideally, we'd like to file for a permit no later than late January."

Gietzen said the alteration of protocols would not be a problem for ice carvers, whose businesses have been ravaged by the pandemic.

"The carvers who do this for a living usually generate most of their revenue from weddings and corporate functions, both of which have been limited in

2020," he said. "So any work they could get, even if it's on a smaller scale, would be welcomed, I'm sure."

The 2021 Plymouth Ice Festival traditionally has been held in early January; the 2021 festival initially had a Jan. 9-11 date.

Gietzen said an announcement on the potential cancellation of the event — or confirmation that the festival will be held — would be made as early as possible so that no one loses money.

eawright@hometownlife.com

Vaccine

Continued from Page 1A

"They don't unblind the trial until this week," Hunter said Monday, "but we're pretty sure I got the placebo and my mom got the vaccine."

"It makes sense that my mom's body reacted to the vaccine, if she did indeed get it, the way it did because this is the strongest, most-effective vaccine ever developed."

Michelle's recent history with shingles and flu vaccines resulted in similar side effects, she said.

When the Halls returned to Farmington Hills in November for the second dose of the procedure, Michelle said she had no worries.

"I did develop a fever of 101 overnight and I had a headache, some body aches ... but I felt fine the next day," she said. "Saying that, I don't want to scare anyone away from getting the vaccine once it becomes available to them."

"I was among the 2 percent who felt side effects, and I usually feel effects from vaccines regardless of what they're for."

Hunter's second injection created no side effects, galvanizing his belief that he had received the placebo. If that's true, he will be eligible to be vaccinated for real as early as January.

The \$120 check each of the Halls received for their efforts — neither was expecting any compensation when they signed up — was secondary to their willingness to help the vaccine's journey toward approval.

"I have felt so helpless and even guilty that so many people are out there risking their lives fighting to help others,

I felt like this was finally something I could do to help," said Michelle.

In another effort to help, she said, she made a habit of buying meals from local restaurants and having them delivered to families who were hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic and to healthcare and essential workers.

"But (volunteering for the trial) was something that felt so much bigger. I could finally feel like I was doing my part to contribute," she said.

Although admitting he was happy to do his part to help the Pfizer vaccine secure approval for emergency use, Hunter compared his role in the trial to recycling.

"We're doing a very small part of a really important thing," said Hunter, who graduated this summer from MSU with degrees in microbiology and human biology after just three years. "The hardest part for me was agreeing to give blood six times over the next two years. In the past, I've nearly passed out when I've had to give blood, but I can honestly say it's not that big of a deal for me anymore."

During the weeks between their first and second injections, the Halls discovered that — despite their stringent adherence to social distancing guidelines — they were in close contact with individuals who later tested positive for COVID-19.

"We both got tested and we both tested negative," Hunter said.

Michelle said although it's a near certainty that she has been vaccinated — giving her up to a 95 percent chance that she will not be infected with COVID-19, Pfizer asserts — she still plans to wear a mask in public to make people feel comfortable.

"For those people who are thinking



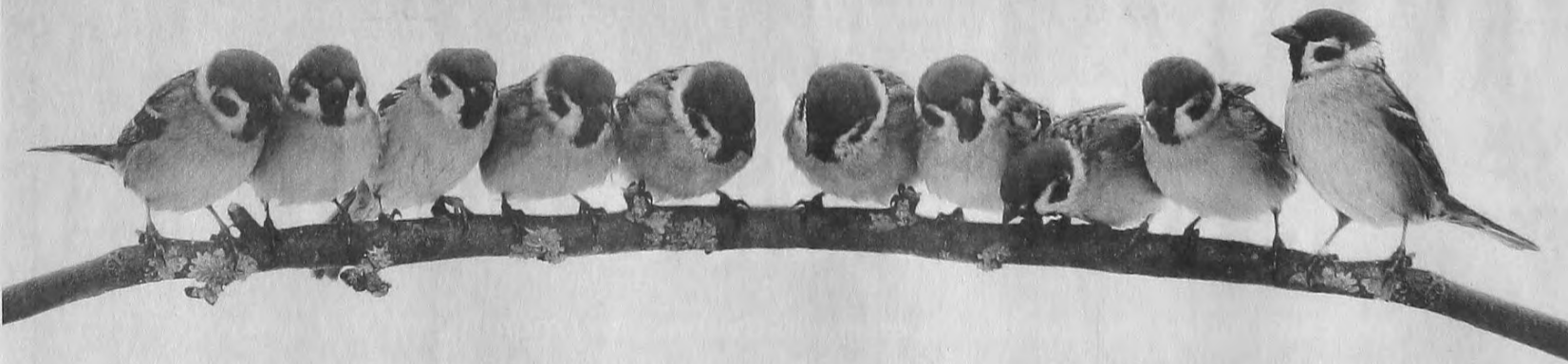
Hunter Hall, left, and his mother, Michelle Hall, volunteered for the two-dose Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine trial, with differing results. JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

about not getting the vaccine, I would recommend that they reconsider," Michelle said. "During the months since March when this all started, I was fearful of even going to the grocery store. I'd have just about everything delivered, or if I did go to a store, I'd only buy a few items, then get out of there."

"Last week, I went to the grocery store and I actually took my time. I was so relaxed, so at ease. Knowing I'm protected removed so much stress from my life."

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

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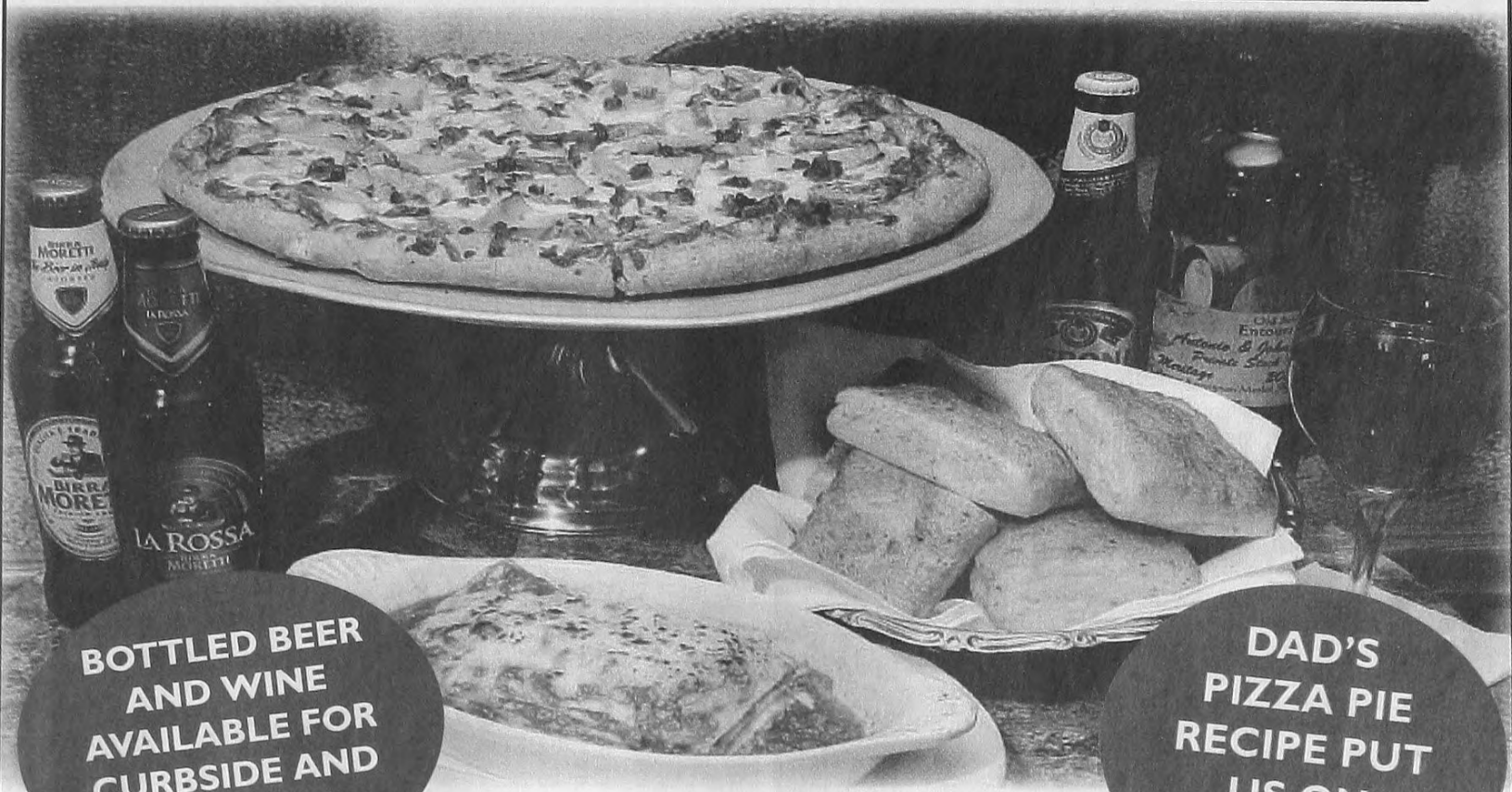
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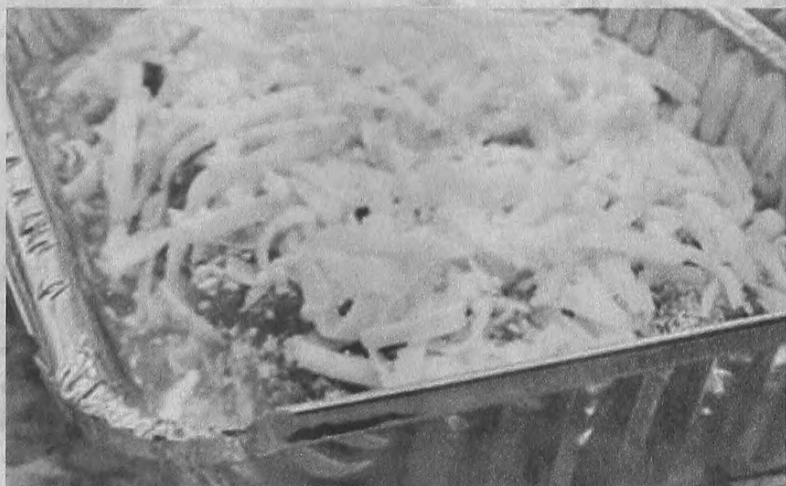
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Obituaries

Elizabeth (Betsy) Harman Quinn Harrison

Elizabeth (Betsy) Harman Quinn Harrison, 77, passed away peacefully on December 7th, 2020, following a long battle with Alzheimer's.

She was born in Ann Arbor and raised in Birmingham. She earned a Bachelor of Education at the University of Michigan, where she met her loving husband, Curt, of 53 years. They raised their three daughters in Flint, Michigan, where they shared many great times with family and friends.

Betsy's family used to refer to her as a professional volunteer. She was active in the Junior League of Flint, the Flint Consortium on Child Abuse and Neglect, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church, to name a few of the wonderful organizations to which she belonged. She was also an integral member of the University of Michigan Alumni Association, including serving as President of the Alumnae Council, where she was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Service Award. Besides volunteering and taking care of her family, Betsy was known for her love of gardening. She was a natural teacher and loved to share her skills, which led her to study landscape design at Michigan State University and eventually open her own company, Heavens to Betsy Landscape Design. In their retirement years, Curt and Betsy became permanent residents in the Petoskey area, where they had many lifelong memories of Northern Michigan.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father, Elizabeth (Betty) and Lawrence E. Quinn, and her brother, Lawrence Quinn. She leaves behind her husband, Curtis Allen Harrison, daughters and sons-in-law, Beth (Eric) Knudsen, Emily (Eric) Lieske, and Jennifer (Jeff) Thornton, grandchildren Matt, Abby, Mara, Lorelei and Liam, and sister Katherine (Clifford) Cox, as well as many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A memorial for family and friends is planned for early summer. In lieu of flowers, the family prefers memorial donations to the Alzheimer's Association, Michigan Chapter, or Hospice of Michigan.



Carrol R. Nichols

TRAVERSE CITY - Carrol Reed Nichols, 90, of Traverse City, passed away from complications of Covid-19 on December 7, 2020. Memorial services are postponed. Please share condolences at www.martinson.info.



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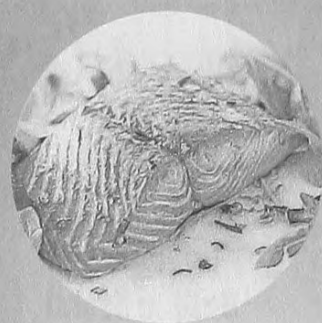
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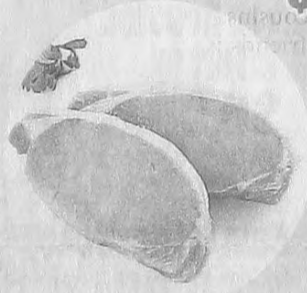
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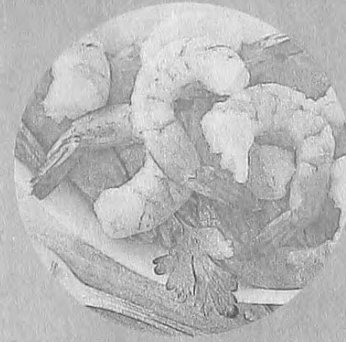
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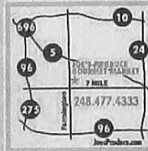


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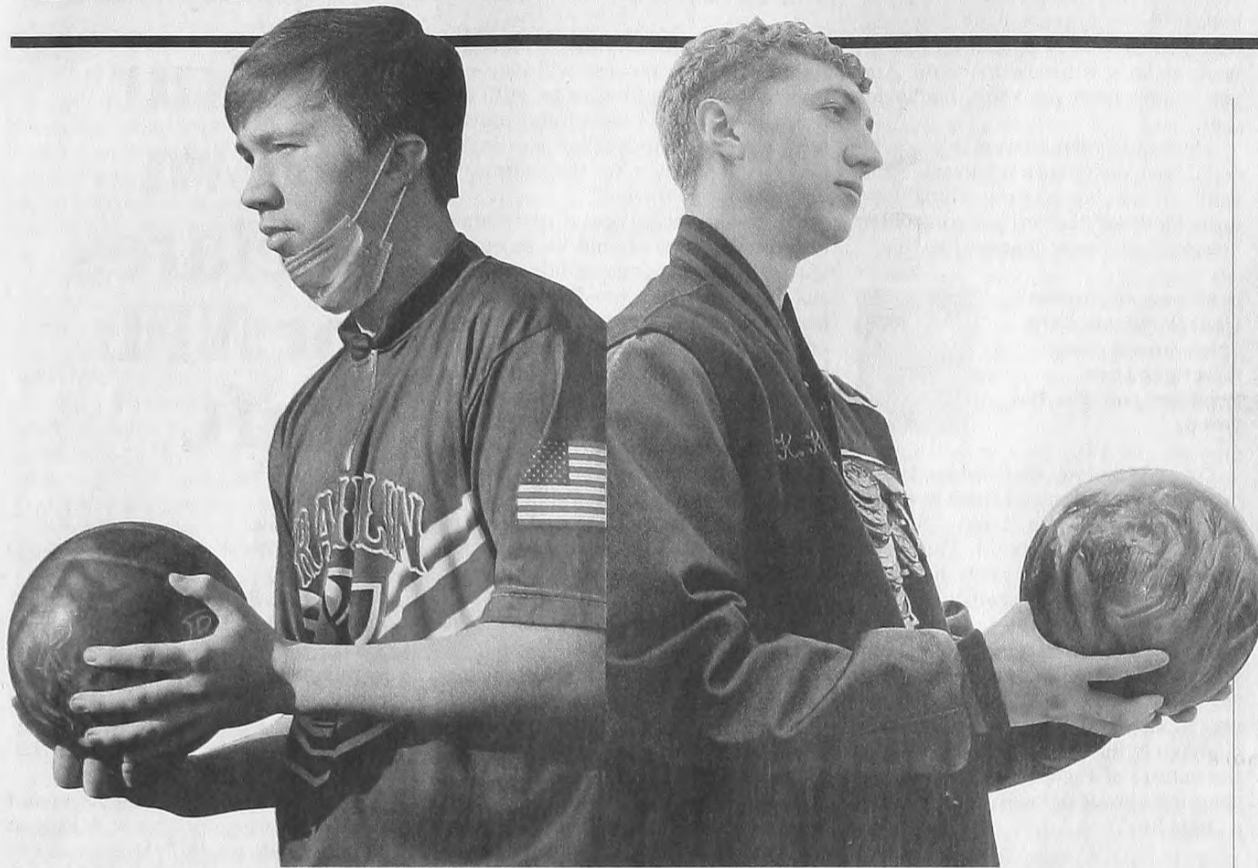
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SPORTS



Livonia Franklin junior Ian Cain, left, and senior Ken Kloth Jr. are hoping to get back on the lanes in competition soon.
PHOTOS BY JOHN HEIDER/HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

'WE'RE READY TO GO'

Livonia Franklin hopes for chance to continue momentum

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com | USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

From the start of his freshman year at Livonia Franklin, Ken Kloth Jr. was on a mission: start a bowling team at his school. ● He grew up watching his father bowl in Friday night leagues starting at age 4, first joining a league himself when he was 6. He loved the competitiveness of the sport and loved the friendships. ● His goal was to bring that atmosphere to Livonia Public Schools. ● As a freshman in 2017, Kloth, clad in a bowling jersey and black pants, addressed the Livonia school board, giving them an idea of why bowling would be beneficial to add to the athletic program. ● "I pretty much told them every other high school in our conference, they had bowling and they were successful," Kloth said. "They've had state champions and they have had their state champions grow and become regional champions and professionals over time. ● "For us to not have bowling, being one of the biggest bowling states in the country, it was crazy to me." ● Three years later, Kloth, now a senior, and the rest of Franklin's bowling team have a city title, a district title, a conference championship and a regional title, qualifying for the state tournament as a team for the first

See PATRIOTS, Page 4B

Cranbrook Kingswood girls swim regains love for the sport

Colin Gay

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Cranbrook Kingswood senior swimmer Gwen Woodbury, a self-described perfectionist, learned to be patient during the 2020 season.

She knew that swimming is not a sport of instant gratification; it was one of hard work, one filled with practice no matter the time of year.

But in the past, Woodbury knew then the peak would be because she has been there before: the Division 3 state final, one that the Cranes won in 2017.

But as the hard work remained in 2020, the certainty of that gratification did not.

"The whole thing of not knowing when or where everything is going to happen - whether we are going to pause, whether we are actually going to have a season - has taught me you just have to

See CRANES, Page 3B



Charlotte Trunsky and Gwen Woodbury, who have combined for six state individual and relay titles, were freshmen on Cranbrook Kingswood's 2017 state title team.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHARLOTTE TRUNSKY

Burnside steps down as Novi football head coach

Colin Gay

Hometownlife.com

USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Late in the 2020 season, Novi head football coach Jeff Burnside started something he had never done in his 20 years as a coach: stop.

During pre- and post-game, he would take a step back and soak in his surroundings. After a career of not celebrating wins well, he tried to stay in the moment. He wanted to truly enjoy watching his athletes play the sport they loved.

Burnside knew in the middle of the 2020 season that it would be his last with the Wildcats football team after eight years as the head coach and numerous more as an assistant.

He was exhausted. He thought of his 13-year-old daughter and the events he missed in her life, those family camping trips they never took, those busy July months he spent at Novi preparing for the fall while his family was on summer vacation.

He was done.

"My philosophy is that if I'm not 100%

committed to my kids in the fall, then I shouldn't be coaching," Burnside said. "I

believe that if you are focused on your next opportunity, you are not doing the current job, the service it needs. I'm not going to do that to our kids."

Burnside knew what he was leaving. He knew the potential of the 2021 team, watching a team end the regular season with a 46-0 victory against Salem - what he

saw as an "old-school Novi win" - and start the playoffs with a 14-point win against Brighton.

But the Novi head coach also knew that if he stayed, he would not be practicing the message that he consistently gave to his players.

"I preach to our boys all the time: 'It's more important to me about how you are when you're 40,'" Burnside said. "No. 1, we want them to play safe - we don't want injuries. We want them to be able

See BURNSIDE, Page 2B

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Spielman brings hope to Lions after rough years

Front-office hire gives team sense of 'vision' for future



Jeff Seidel
Columnist
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

I haven't said this in a long time: I absolutely love the direction of the Lions. Less than a year on the job, owner Sheila Ford Hamp is on a roll, making smart decisions and improving this organization.

First, she fired general manager Bob Quinn and Matt Patricia. That's an instant addition by subtraction.

But more significantly, she just hired Chris Spielman to be a member of the front office and he will participate in interviews for the team's general manager and head coach.

Thank you, football gods. Spielman brings this search, as well as the front office, instant credibility, not to mention some heart and soul.

Officially, Spielman will be a special assistant to chairman and president and CEO. And he will report directly to Lions President and CEO Rod Wood.

"I've had Chris on my mind for a long time about a role with the team, and the timing seemed right, given the change that we're going through right now," Wood said in a call with reporters.

Spielman will have far-reaching responsibilities, similar to how the Tigers employ Kirk Gibson, Willie Horton, Jim Leyland, Lance Parrish and Alan Trammell.

Tigers general manager Al Avila uses those former Tigers greats in different ways, as a walking embodiment of the team's history, as a sounding board and a trusting voice. Trammell has done everything from working as an instructor with first-round pick Spencer Torkelson, to going on scouting missions to look at college prospects, to traveling around the minor leagues looking at prospects and giving advice to young kids.

Which seems smart. Use all of his talents.

And Trammell's voice carries weight.

Spielman's should too. You don't think Spielman could help change the culture? Or even go in the film room and help give some tips to the linebackers? Or even see through when a GM is blowing smoke to an owner? Or just sense when a team is giving up?

Of course he can. That's what makes

this news so intriguing.

Because he can improve this organization in several ways, starting with the GM search.

"Chris will be actively involved," Wood said. "He will sit in on every interview."

'I have a vision'

Now, I'm can help but wonder: What if this would have happened sooner?

Do you think the Lions would have passed on a quarterback and taken a corner back in the 2020 draft? I firmly believe the only reason the Lions did that was because Patricia and Quinn were under a win-now mandate. And yes, Hamp deserves some blame for that.

Maybe, if Spielman were in place, he could have pulled ownership aside and said: "Think big picture. Think long term. Matthew Stafford is getting older. You don't get many chances like this."

In his new job, former Lions linebacker Chris Spielman will report directly to Lions President and CEO Rod Wood.



Or even before that, when Hamp brought back Quinn and Patricia, Spielman might have told Hamp: "You are out of your freakin' mind. This team would be better without Patricia."

OK. Maybe, that's just wishful thinking.

"I have a vision that matches exactly what Rod and Sheila envisioned," Spielman told reporters. "And that's the only way that could work because we're completely in sync of the direction of the culture of the building and something to be proud of for everybody that's a Lions fan."

Heart and soul

After Hamp fired Patricia and Quinn, she held a press conference and said something concerning. "Ten days ago, we looked like we had a good chance to be playoff bound," she said Nov. 28, even though the team had lost four of five games.

That showed me she couldn't see the trajectory of this team.

Sure, you can argue Quinn and Patricia should have been fired sooner — like last winter, as I have suggested numerous times.

And you can argue that if Patricia would have been fired sooner, the Lions might actually have more wins. Because this team is certainly playing better with him gone.

But that is just hindsight.

This is a time to look forward. And that's what is most encouraging about this hire.

Spielman understands the misery of Lions fans. He has lived through the mediocrity, although he did play in five playoff games during an eight-year Lions career. He is smart and knows football. More than anything, I trust him. And as a former player, he brings some heart and soul back to this organization.

'Find the best team'

In a memo to employees Monday, Hamp said "the process will play out over the next six weeks or so, with the result being a well vetted and proven head coach/GM team that can finally take the Lions where we all so earnestly wish to go — to the top!"

On the surface, I found that memo encouraging. She should be thorough and look at as many candidates as possible for both jobs. But when you parse her words, what does it mean that they are looking for a "proven" head coach and GM? Does that mean the coach must have head coaching experience? Might that prevent them from finding the next, great young coach?

I found that concerning until I heard from Spielman.

"I think we're trying to find the best team, and if that means there are two first-time individuals, that'll be what happens," he said.

As a former player, he understands the game.

As a TV analyst, he's had a chance to talk to countless coaches and assistants, picking their brains and expanding his network.

"I'm not qualified to be a general manager," he said. "I do know what works and what doesn't work by being 30 years in this business and traveling around to 32 teams year-in and year-out and having a brother in the business and watching and learning in conversations with him about what works for him (and) what doesn't work to be able to kind of build what our goal is, that 'One Pride' thing. That one culture."

You know what type of coach the Lions need? The kind who can make Spielman want to run through a wall in the interview process. That's the right candidate.

Thankfully, Spielman will be in the room now.

And finally, there is reason for hope. Contact Jeff Seidel at jseidel@freepress.com. Follow him on Twitter at [@seideljeff](https://twitter.com/seideljeff). To read his recent columns, go to freep.com/sports/jeff-seidel.



Michigan State cornerback Shakur Brown returns an interception thrown by Northwestern quarterback Peyton Ramsey during the first half at Spartan Stadium on Nov. 28.

KIRTHMON F. DOZIER/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Shakur Brown declares for NFL draft

Chris Solari

Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Michigan State football has its first early departure for the NFL of the Mel Tucker era.

Junior cornerback Shakur Brown announced Monday night via Twitter that he plans to forgo his remaining eligibility and declare for the 2021 NFL draft.

"I've grown so much as a player and a person during my time at Michigan State," Brown wrote. "The lessons I've learned both on and off the field, have built a solid foundation for success and will stay with me for the rest of my life."

Brown is tied for the national lead with five interceptions this season. The 5-foot-11, 190-pounder from Stockbridge, Georgia, has 25 tackles and four pass breakups while starting all seven games this fall.

In an interview late last month with NFLDraftDiamonds.com, Brown said he did not "feel any type of stress" playing in college.

"I feel like I was made to be here and to play at this level," he said. "For real, the truth is people are going to have something to say about what you are doing. As a player and as a team. There is always a hater talking and trying to run his mouth. But if you really keep it inside with the team, those things won't be a bother, or extra stress really. You need to focus on your own work, your own business, and not worry about all the extra talk."

An anonymous scout told the website that both he and MSU coaches liked Brown's game.

"They all say the same thing. That he works hard and he is a great teammate. He has great discipline in his game, which I love," the scout said. "Meaning he never really seems to be out of place. He has great eyes and always seems to be around the ball. Seems to have a maturity to him as well, which can rare sometimes."

"Sometimes you talk to these guys and they are childish, or not mentally or emotionally ready. He isn't one of those guys. So that can be a good thing at the next level."

Brown entered this year having started five games with 29 tackles, two interceptions and five breakups before emerging as a force in coverage. He opened the season as MSU's nickelback against Rutgers, having an interception touchdown called back, before moving to corner against Michigan and remaining there the rest of the season. Brown had a pick-six as a redshirt freshman at Indiana in 2018.

"As far as his skill set, what don't you like about him?" the scout told NFLDraftDiamonds.com. "I mean, he needs some work, but all things that can be coached. But he has great hips, can tackle, he is aggressive in the run game. Not afraid to get dirty, I like that a ton. He understands what the offense is trying to do, and that is a good thing — it's like having another coach sometimes. He is a guy I think that knows the roles of everyone on the field. I think he has a chance to be a great player at the next level."

Contact Chris Solari at csolari@freepress.com. Follow him on Twitter at [@chrisolari](https://twitter.com/chrisolari).

Burnside

Continued from Page 1B

to play golf when you are 40, but we want them to be good husbands, great fathers, leaders in the community.

"Sometimes I preach all that and sometimes I reflect and make sure I am doing the exact same thing."

Old-school Novi

Burnside knows what Novi football used to be.

He was an assistant coach throughout the 2000s, joining the team while it made nine playoff appearances from 1999 to 2008, losing to Brother Rice in the state semifinals in 2003. He had been through the district titles, the league titles. As head coach, he wanted to bring that feeling back.

Burnside also knew in the Novi community, he would have limited numbers to work with: about 35 to 40 players. But in each game he coached, he said the Wildcats were aggressive.

"I'd say for the past eight years, we have been competitive, every game," Burnside said. "There has been very few games where we would walk out and we just go, 'Yeah, we didn't belong on the field tonight.'"

The Novi head coach remembered the Wildcats' opening playoff game in 2015 as a prime example: taking on an undefeated West Bloomfield team that many thought would beat his team down, including those in his locker room.

"I remember telling the guys Monday when we got to film, I said, 'Guys, we can beat these guys if we execute our game plan,'" Burnside said. "And I remember

some of the coaches in the room looking at me going, 'What?'"

Novi beat West Bloomfield, 31-28, in that first-round game, one of three playoff wins for Burnside as a head coach — the other two coming against Brighton.

In his tenure with the Wildcats as head coach, Burnside finished with a record of 30-45, finishing his final season at Novi, 3-5 with a district final appearance.

'We above me'

But to Burnside, coaching was much more than just about the game itself.

He defined it as a slogan the Novi athletic program had been defined by over the past few years: "We above me."

To him, it's a division problem. If "me" is the denominator and it is lessened, then the overall outcome will be greater. If the "me" is increased, the overall outcome decreases.

Burnside's goal as a coach was for his players to understand the privilege of having the ability to play football, through all the ups and downs.

"You're lucky enough that you get to come out and we get to crush you in the weight room or you walk out on leg day and you are just exhausted. You are lucky enough that I just yelled at you because you made a silly mistake," Burnside said. "There are kids that would love to be out here and just can't."

The head coach was reminded of Novi's game against South Lyon East in 2016, giving senior Robby Heil, who was a member of the special needs program at the school, a chance to run for a 36-yard touchdown.

Burnside views that scripted play as one of his favorite moments in his tenure.

"I thought that was one of the coolest

things we have ever done," Burnside said. "To me, it was never done as anything other than just... Robby was a senior. My thing is during your senior nights and and senior year is everybody gets a start at some point. To me, that was a senior getting that play."

Novi senior fullback Alex Vargas said he was shocked and saddened by Burnside's announcement to his team. But he was happy for what his football head coach helped him do on and off the field.

"He's easily been one of my favorite coaches and the best coaches I have had," Vargas said. "He helped me on the field all the time, but off the field, he was the go-to guy for me in that school. I could go to him for any problem, football related, school related, outside of school related."

Burnside, a physics teacher at Novi High School, has his classroom right across the hall from the weight room.

He can't imagine what next year will be like, watching from afar as his team trains and prepares for 2021. He knows the next head coach has the potential to bring Novi its first back-to-back playoff appearances since 2015-16, with an ability to make some noise.

But Burnside is satisfied with what he did, what he accomplished, what he tried to instill.

For the betterment of the longevity of the program, he said, it was time for him to step away. Burnside just hopes his lessons don't go with him.

"We just have to do a better job at taking care of the people around us," Burnside said. "That's what I hope I did with our boys over the past eight years."

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter at [@ColinGay17](https://twitter.com/ColinGay17). Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

Cranes

Continued from Page 1B

be patient and you can't get upset about things you can't control," Woodbury said.

The Cranbrook Kingswood girls swim and dive team's preseason goal was to give the senior class its second state title in four years. But through the uncertainty of 2020, the Cranes regained a love for the sport itself despite not being able to finish.

Wake-up call

Paul Ellis came into his first season as Cranbrook Kingswood's head girls swim and dive coach familiar with what metro Detroit swimmers had to offer. He swam at Lahser and coached at Bloomfield Hills prior to leaving for an assistant coaching job at Washington and Lee University.

Taking the coaching job from Chris Bagley - he was with the Cranes for eight seasons - Ellis could relate to the team's overall uncertainty.

At the college level, the NCAA finals were four days away when the coronavirus halted Washington and Lee University's season.

"While you are talking about girls that are great athletes at the high school level, moving onto the college level and having the opportunity taken away from you is even more significant," Ellis said.

When Ellis took over the Cranes program in June, there were many questions still to be answered, including a lack of a home pool with Cranbrook's pool being under construction.

But Ellis and his team found fuel from former Cranbrook Kingswood head football coach Ben Jones, who died in a car accident in August.

"His phrase was always 'Get to. You get to be here. You get to practice,'" Ellis said. "The girls really exemplified that."

"It showed, and that's what I love to see as a coach. They did everything they could and the results spoke for themselves."

After returning to the pool Aug. 12, Cranbrook shut down all fall athletics due positive coronavirus cases. Even when swimmers returned to the pool, it was with a new-found appreciation for what they had the chance to do.

"That, just so early in the season, gave



The Cranbrook Kingswood girls swim and dive team, guided by head coach Paul Ellis, back row, far right, in his first season with the Cranes, had high hopes for 2020.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY GWEN WOODBURY

us a wake-up call - not that we weren't already being careful, but just that this season is literally on an edge," Woodbury said. "We have no clue what's going to happen, we have no idea what COVID would bring, what the administration would bring."

"Honestly, it didn't really change our training that much, but it just made us so much more careful. It helped with the team dynamic as well, just knowing any of these practices could be the last ones we have with each other."

High hopes deflated

Heading into 2020, many Cranes remembered the way they started their high school careers. Woodbury and Charlotte Trunsky each earned state titles in the 200-yard and 400-yard freestyle relays, with Woodbury earning individual state titles in the 100-yard and 200-yard freestyle.

"I think a lot of people were excited for our class just because not many teams would get a good class of freshmen with six, seven, eight girls who would all eventually make it to states," Trunsky said.

And when competitions started in 2020 the Cranes, including Justine Murdock, Charlotte DeSantos and Serena Hao, seemed to be back on that path.

Cranbrook Kingswood finished sec-

ond at its county meet, its best performance in school history, with each of the team's participants earning state cuts.

"It made me, and a lot of the team members, realize that we do love the sport," Woodbury said. "We love racing and love everything that comes with it."

Heading into the state meet, the Cranes were well aware of what they could do. Ellis and his team would compare their times with other Division 3 schools, confident they had the upper hand heading into the meet, but not jinxing anything.

This is what made the postponement even more devastating for the Cranes: They did have something to lose by not swimming, something that no time trials could bring.

"I think all of us broke down and started crying because putting in so much work in early mornings and weekends for four months, to have that kind of up in the air now was really, really difficult for all of us to imagine," Trunsky said.

Even though it was not something she wanted to happen, Woodbury saw this outcome coming.

"I'm at that point where it's like in the back of my mind I knew that something like this would happen," Woodbury said. "I'm at that point where... there's nothing I could do. I did everything I could, my team did everything they could."

As the waiting continued, Ellis tried to

keep his team motivated, seeing his swimmers joining gyms, finding pools wherever they could get training in.

But over time, that got harder and harder. And when it got pushed back again, likely moving a potential state meet to 2021, Trunsky felt deflated.

"Now we are all struggling, not only in the aspect of swimming, but also morally because I think a lot of us don't really want to keep going just because the odds of state meets happening keep on decreasing," she said. "But we don't want to let our team down."

Woodbury is committed to swim at Ohio State starting in the fall, but for Trunsky, this could be her last opportunity to swim, her "last hurrah," as she puts it.

For Ellis, he is losing almost half his team after the 2020 season.

While the gratification is still up in the air, Woodbury knows there are lessons through the uncertainty of the season that she will take with her moving forward.

"Even though swimming is very much an individual-based sport, it requires a team to really get through it," Woodbury said.

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Patriots

Continued from Page 1B

time in 2020.

Now, with bowling alleys across the state closed and the winter season in limbo, the Patriots are doing everything they can to continue that momentum into whatever the 2020-21 season brings.

Fast start

Franklin head coach Dan Hejka knew the potential in the Livonia area when he took the job. He knew the quality of youth leagues at nearby alleys including Woodland Lanes, Merri-Bowl and Town N Country.

But, for many of the members, they did not have anywhere to go when the high school season started.

When Franklin started a team, Ian Cain said it was a group of players who were used to the spotlight and accustomed to bowling in tournaments, just not competing at the team level.

Yet when the Patriots began its first season, they were automatically one of the most experienced teams in the state.

"We knew from the start, ever since the beginning of the program, we knew we were able to compete at the highest level," Cain said. "We got pretty lucky with the kids in our area all going to the same high school. We knew our level of competition was way up there."

Kloth felt high school bowling was just another tournament.

The experienced players on the Franklin roster were not more nervous than usual, but they were more excited for the fact they were playing for something more than themselves.

"When we bowl tournaments, it's an individual thing," Kloth said. "For us to be competing for a team, it's very special."

Three individual Patriots qualified for states in 2019, with Kloth earning the No. 1 seed in the qualifying round before losing in the first round by 17 pins.

But Hejka saw progress in the first season, leading to an increase of participation.

"The first year, it was 'Let's see what this is all about. Oh my gosh, we are pretty darn successful for a first year program. It's kind of starting to grow a



In its second year as a program, Livonia Franklin bowling earned a KLAA title and placed eighth in the state tournament in 2020.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAN HEJKA

little bit," Hejka said.

In 2020, Kloth, Cain and Ian Wright – the top average bowler in the Kensington Lakes Activities Association as a freshman – each earned all-region and all-conference honors.

Heading into the team's third season, Hejka said the team needs to get better mentally, but he is confident his group can compete with anybody.

"I think everyone kind of understands where we are at," Hejka said. "I'm chomping at the bit, too, because we qualified fourth in the state last year, finished eighth and we're ready to go. We really took a lot of people by surprise and we really want to get after it."

"Obviously, it's got to be safe."

Waiting game

Hejka knows bowling alleys are not built for spectators. At a league or state meet, he remembers people standing shoulder-to-shoulder, watching a lane, saying there is "no breathing room in the place."

But while expectations are high for the winter season, the Franklin head coach has barely been able to see his team. Tryouts were initially scheduled for Nov. 16, one day after the state government issued its COVID-19 guidelines closing in-person learning and shutting down high school athletics.

Hejka knows his players are frustrated and want to be able to bowl, improve and get better. But he knows that doesn't mean the shutting down of high school sports and the closing of bowling alleys is not the right thing to do.

"We're going to have our time," Hejka said. "I talked to them about making good choices so that when we do have a

season, you are not the guy that shuts our season down when this may be a very, very big season for us. We're hoping."

Franklin bowlers have found ways to improve on their skills out of state. Many have traveled south to Ohio and other Midwestern states, allowing them to get practice reps and tournament wins.

But like any sport, Cain said the more time spent away, the more skill you lose.

"You definitely over time lose the physical gains you have made having such a long break, even though it helped my body repair," Cain said. "Coming back to it, I lost a lot of the things I worked on getting just before we left. A lot of the strides made kind of fell off."

Cain is not very confident bowling will return in the winter months. Not only do teams have to wait for the approval from the state and the Michigan High School Athletic Association, but also for bowling alleys to open up.

The junior hopes it will be moved to spring, but encourages his teammates to be prepared no matter what.

"Just try to prepare yourself, just try to get ready," Cain said. "Expect it to happen, and if it doesn't, oh well. But you can't expect it not to happen and then be surprised, 'Oh wait, it's happening.' You have to prepare yourself mentally, although it is hard physically not being able to bowl."

Kloth has signed to bowl at Madonna next season, and is looking forward to what opportunities it will bring. But he wants one more season with Franklin: the team he helped establish, the team he helped build.

"For it being my last year, I want to be able to have those friendships, sportsmanship with other teams too," Kloth said. "And for the individual aspect too, compete to become a state champion or a regional champion, individual is huge too."

"Just me competing with my team, my guys, my coach, it's just so much fun."

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter at [@ColinGay17](https://twitter.com/ColinGay17). Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

Howell's Carney surprised to win Miss Softball

Bill Khan

Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

Molly Carney figured she'd received the last of her high school softball accolades.

Carney pitched her final game for Howell on June 15, 2019, before her senior season in 2020 was wiped out because of COVID-19 fears.

She graduated from Howell in May and has been attending the University of Notre Dame for three months, so her

high school days appeared to be well in the rearview mirror.

Then a package arrived last weekend with a wooden plaque, the final award in Carney's decorated high school softball career.



Carney

Carney has been named Miss Softball Pitcher in Division 1 by the Michigan High School Softball Coaches Association. The coaches' group voted on Miss Softball pitcher and position player awards in all four divisions, as well as naming an overall winner, despite the loss of the 2020 season, but did not choose an all-state team.

"I don't think I ever saw anything about it before this," Carney said. "So, yeah, I was pretty surprised. I was just opening the mail and there was that. Especially without the season last spring, I wasn't expecting anything."

She was 79-15 during her career, striking out 691 batters in 518½ innings. Carney was particularly clutch during the state tournament, going 14-3 with a 1.31 earned run average, fanning 157 batters in 112½ innings. She allowed one earned run or less in 13 of those 17 games.

She pitched Howell to the regional championship game as a freshman, the state semifinals as a sophomore and the state championship game as a junior.

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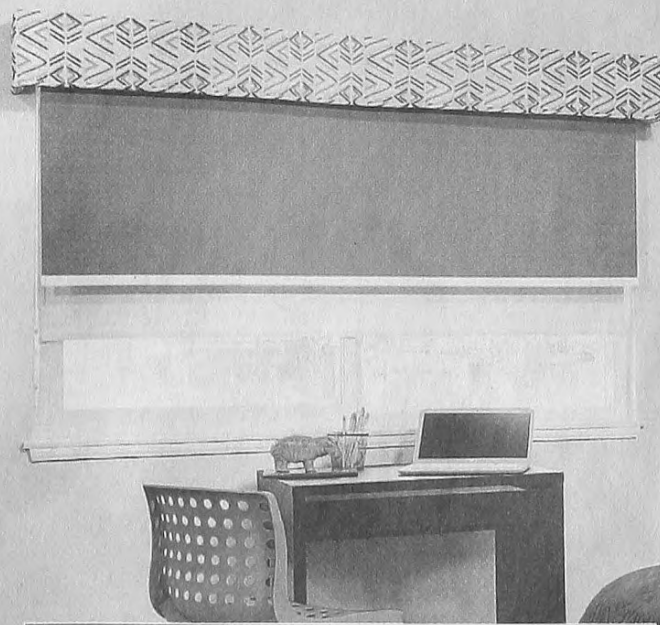
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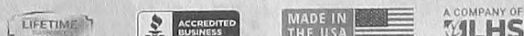
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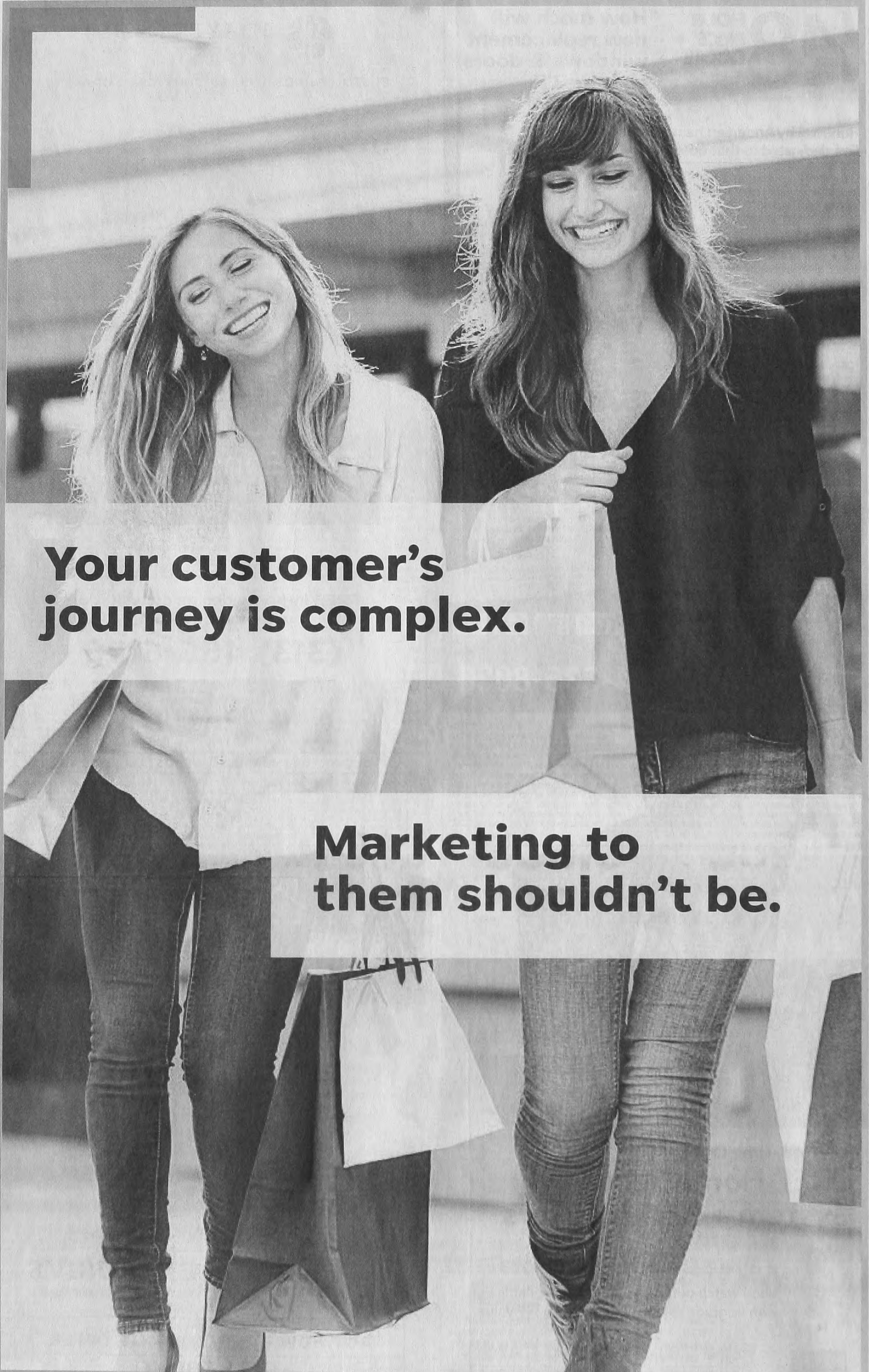
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