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Will political changes of 2019 stick in 2020?

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

For much of western Wayne and Oakland counties, change has come.

Just look at 19th District State Rep. Laurie Pohutsky, 7th District State Senator Dayna Polehanki, Farmington Hills Mayor Vicki Barnett, Livonia Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan, U.S. Congresswoman Haley Stevens, U.S. Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin, the Oakland County Commission and 40th District State Representative Mari Manoogian.

They're all Democrats, and they all represent flipped seats.

There's another election on the horizon this November.

The question is, will change last?

How change came

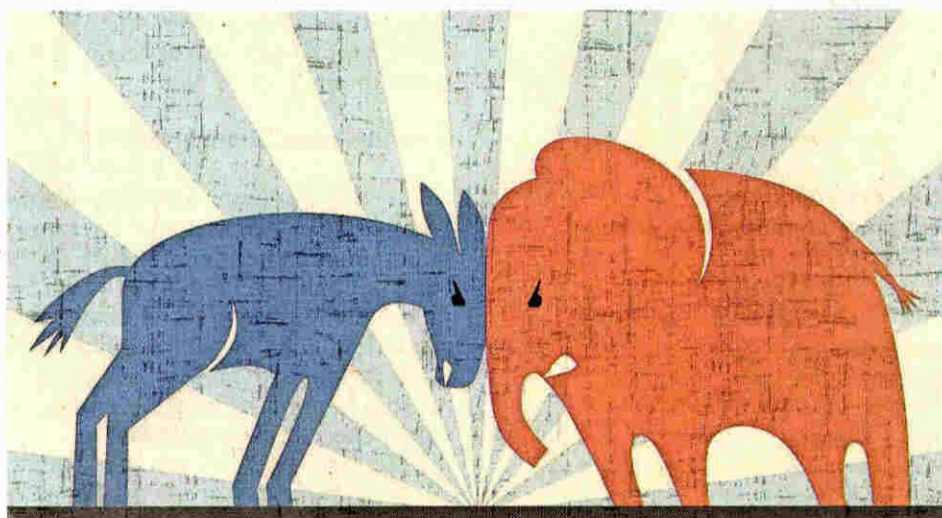
Pohutsky, for instance, is the first Democrat to land her seat since the 1970s.

In large part, she said, she got there by willing to push the political status quo.

"It doesn't have to be business-as-usual politics," she said. "I think that's encouraging people to vote for a type of candidate that has not, historically, done really well here in Livonia."

But it's a lot of little things too. Pohutsky, Stevens, Slotkin and Manoogian ran in the 2018 midterms when the voting trend nationally skewed toward women and left-leaning candidates.

See **CHANGES**, Page 2A



Which affects elections more: hard work during the campaign or political party affiliation? GETTY IMAGES



Emagine Entertainment celebrates the arrival of its 94-by-40-foot screen Dec. 19 at its Canton/Westland location. The first film on the new screen was "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker." CHRISTOPHER M. BJORNBERG/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

Emagine Canton debuts its biggest movie screen

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Opening night for the latest Star Wars blockbuster was the first time Emagine Entertainment Chairman Paul Glantz saw the new Super Emax screen, now open at the theater complex in Canton.

He was in awe.

"I think it's magnificent. I really do,"

he said. "We want to create a very special, out-of-home movie experience."

The new screen at the theater complex at 39535 Ford Road in Canton holds the title of the biggest in Michigan and one of the biggest in the country.

Spanning 94 feet in width and 40 feet in height and projecting in 4K resolution, the screen will immerse movie-goers in the biggest movies going forward, including the premiere screened Dec. 19:

"Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker."

Debuting the screen in time for the end of the series of films was always the goal for the company, Glantz said.

"If you have a spectacular screen, you'd like to open it with some spectacular content," Glantz said.

The new screen, which totals about \$3 million in investment, takes the

See **SCREEN**, Page 3A

November restaurant inspections released

David Veselenak Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

What's going on at your favorite restaurant? You may - or may not - want to know.

Dining out is a huge industry and something nearly everyone in the area does. It's up to county health departments to make sure those restaurants are doing things to keep you happy and healthy.

They inspect - Oakland County does it in-house and Wayne County contracts with Sword Solutions - restaurants during unannounced visits at least twice a year. They're looking for priority violations: the ones that are the worst-of-the-worst that include spoiled food, incorrect handling and unsanitary conditions.

In the Hometown Life area, 203 public kitchens were cited in November.

The full list can be found on our website, HometownLife.com, as they all cannot fit in print.

Here are the number of establishments in each community that had priority violations:

- 15 in Northville and Northville Township
- Eight in Plymouth and Plymouth Township
- 22 with in Canton
- 21 in Wayne and Westland
- 42 in Livonia
- 34 in the Birmingham/Bloomfield area
- 27 in Farmington and Farmington Hills
- 20 in Novi
- Five in South Lyon and Lyon Township
- Nine in Milford and Highland townships

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



Changes

Continued from Page 1A

Metro Detroit is getting younger and perhaps wants younger candidates, another plus for these women.

But local political players say what really makes someone a good candidate, regardless of party affiliation, is being willing to put their boots on the ground and assure people they have their neighborhoods in mind, whether they're working at city hall, in Lansing, or in Washington, D.C.

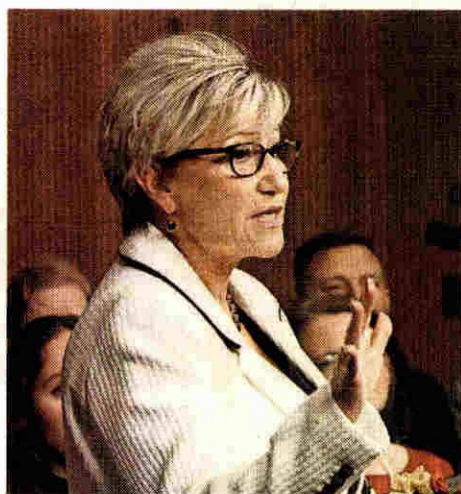
"Laurie is one of the hardest-working candidates I've ever seen," Kate Shishkovski, president of the Livonia Democratic Club, said of Pohutsky. "She is one that goes out and door knocks, she has the coffee hours, she reaches out to constituents, she makes herself available and she's very intelligent."

Pohutsky said she knocked on over 17,000 doors in 2019. Brosnan, on her way to becoming Livonia's mayor, knocked on 47,000 doors. In close elections like theirs, the work put in by these

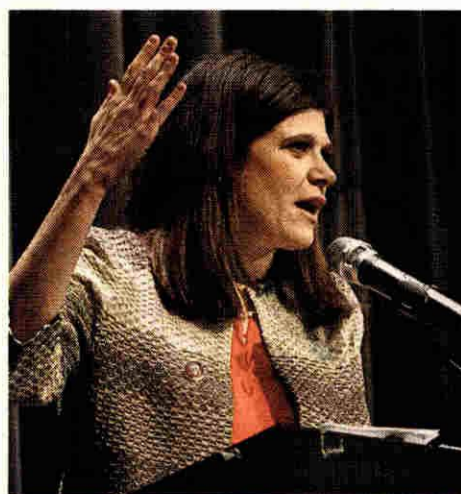


SUBMITTED

19th District State Rep. Laurie Pohutsky, left, Livonia Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan, and U.S. Congresswoman Haley Stevens are among several Democrats who represent flipped seats. Will the changes stick when November comes around?



HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS



Democrats in a traditionally-Republican community can push an atypical, change-making candidate over the top.

"We just knock on people's doors and find out what issues matter to them and what they think with what's going on in Lansing, any issues they've been having," Pohutsky said. "I think that that matters. People know that whether or not they agree with every stance that I take, I'm working for them."

But in today's polarized political climate, these Democrats who flipped seats might have an especially uphill battle to get re-elected.

How long can change last?

"My overwhelming attitude toward it is, regardless of what happens at the national level, I work for you here in the State of Michigan," Pohutsky said.

But, the national social issues that created today's "us versus them" mentality can seep into offices where partisanship doesn't necessarily matter so much, like a city council seat.

"The first question you get asked is 'Are you a Democrat or a Republican?' or 'Are you pro-life or pro-choice?'" said Brandon McCullough, a Democrat who was elected to Livonia City Council in 2019. "I would explain that it's Livonia. It's not partisan."

Wild rumors circulated on both political sides.

McCullough faced accusations of wanting to turn Livonia into a sanctuary city during the election, which he says isn't true.

Laura Toy, a Republican who ran to be Livonia's mayor, dealt with stories linking her to President Donald Trump and her participation in his inauguration. That's also not true.

"The climate is so poor right now," Toy said. "We're not Washington, D.C. We're local Livonia, where we've always stayed positive."

Job responsibilities as an elected official depend on the position; the politics involved with navigating the job differ, too.

Partisan issues are more at the forefront for those in Congress like Stevens and Slotkin.

But those party affiliations trickle down to state races regardless.

The president's impeachment may spell a more competitive race for Pohutsky and Manoojian, who serve at the state level, just because they're Democrats.

"I think that national politics can certainly seep into local politics," said David Dulio, a professor of political science at Oakland University. "I don't think that there is a large number of voters out there that say to themselves, 'I don't like Trump so I'm voting Democrat for the city council.'"

"But I think that it can enter into somebody's calculus."

From Birmingham to Livonia to Novi, local officials say their partisanship doesn't matter in a mayor's office or council chambers.

The argument can also be made that being in the state House versus the U.S. House doesn't mean the same thing on a

partisan level.

"There's no Democratic or Republican way to pick up trash," Brosnan said. "I can't think of a single issue during my last term on city council that had a Democratic or Republican leaning."

Whether trash pickup is partisan or not, candidates said voters appreciate having someone who represents their values, no matter how partisan the office is or isn't.

And today, that can mean caring about a state representative's opinion on impeachment or Second Amendment rights.

"I wasn't involved in politics at all, even in terms of any activism, up until that 2016 national election," said Sonia Patel, president of the Canton Democratic Club, who mostly helps local Democrats. "I think there are people more willing to run now because of that, I think there are people getting more active because of it."

Regardless, Pohutsky, who is facing a reelection campaign along with Manoojian, Slotkin and Stevens this year, said she's up for whatever lies ahead.

"I always assume that this is going to be competitive and I've never taken any of that for granted," Pohutsky said. "So I'm just doing my job and working as hard as I possibly can to represent the people of this area."

"I'm well aware it's going to be a hard fight."

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

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Published Sunday and Thursday by
Observer & Eccentric Media

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Subscription Rates:

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Home Delivery:

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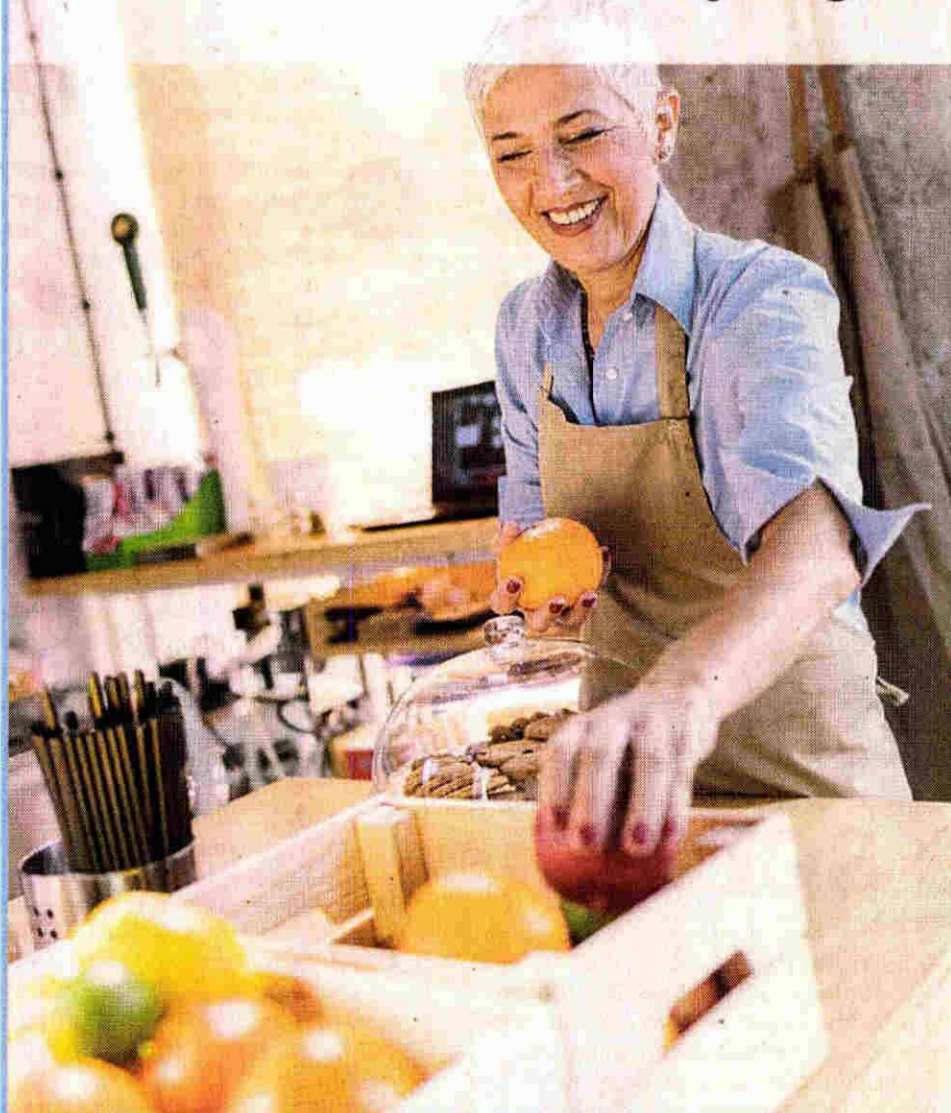
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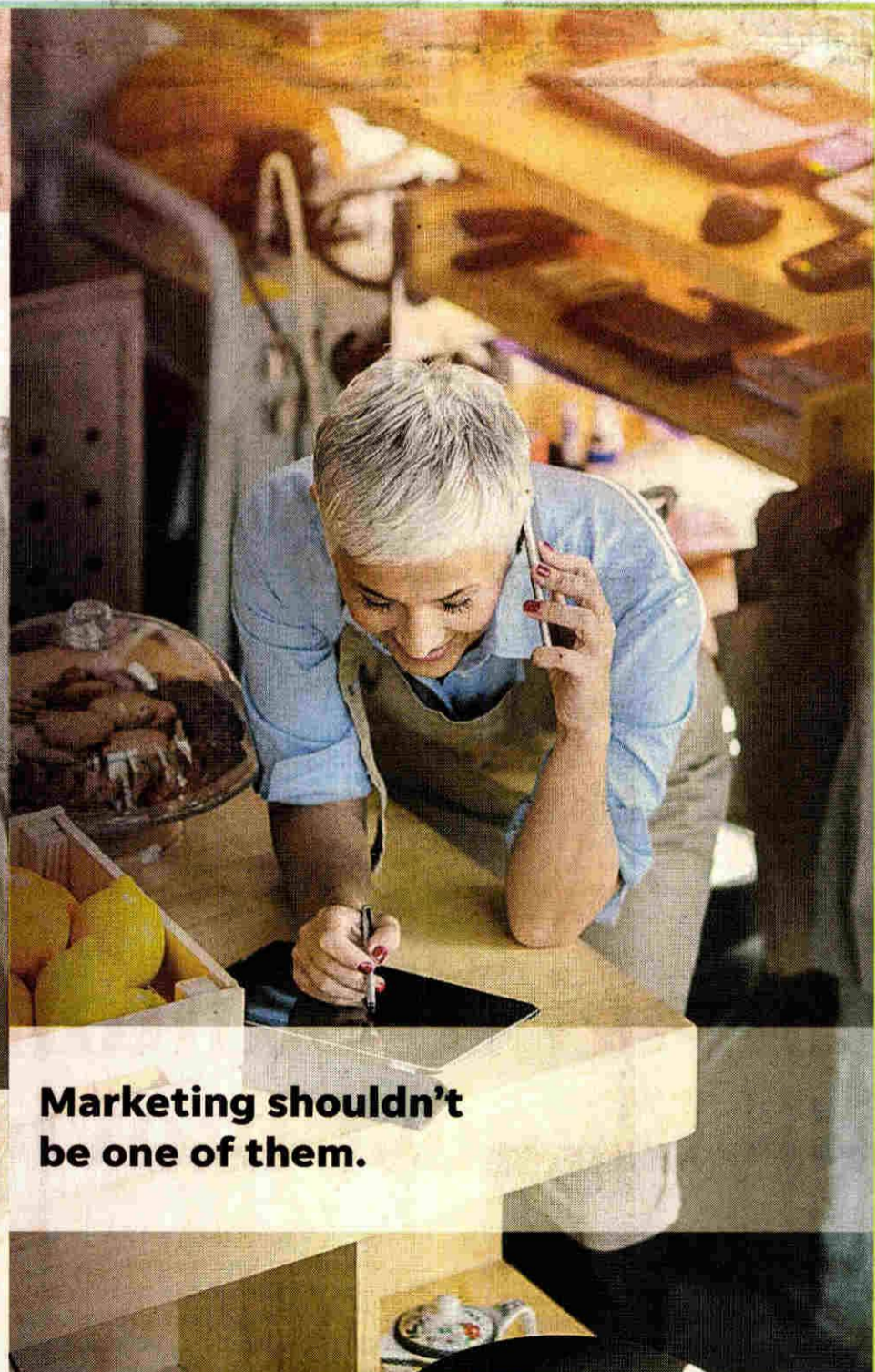
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Screen

Continued from Page 1A

title of largest in the state from another Emagine complex: the screen at the Canton complex is two feet wider than the newest screen at the Emagine Novi, 44425 W. 12 Mile, which opened two years ago, also to premiere a Star Wars movie.

Glanz said they heard from patrons who would make the drive up from western Wayne County to see movies in Novi who wanted to see a similar, massive screen at the complex closer to home.

So work began earlier this year with securing approvals to expand east of the complex, taking over a parking lot that jutted out into the city of Westland to add another 375 seats.

"It turns out people have so adored that experience in Novi that we believe in fact there is an opportunity to have a comparable theater here, if not better," Glanz said.

Movie-goers were treated to the movie's premiere inside the theater that also features new, heated recliner seats, as well as several "cuddle chairs" perfect for a date or for large families.

It's just the most recent move Emagine has made to enhance the movie-going experience.

In addition to the new screens in Canton and Novi, the Riviera in Farmington Hills also added new screens earlier this year.

The company currently operates 22 theater complexes across four states, which includes theaters in Birmingham, Royal Oak and Rochester Hills.

Collaboration between two communities

Because of the complex nature of the project, it required cooperation of the governments of both Canton Township and Westland to get it done, since the new screen extends into Westland.

It's a milestone leaders from both communities are hailing as a victory for the region after they moved quickly to get the proper approvals in place earlier this year.

And that collaboration is enshrined at the entrance to the new theater, where a permanent floor marking shows movie-goers the exact moment



The audience waits to see "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker" on the biggest screen at Emagine Theatres on Dec. 19.



The new screen, which totals about \$3 million in investment, takes the title of largest in the state from another Emagine complex: the screen at the Canton complex is two feet wider than the newest screen at the Emagine Novi, 44425 W. 12 Mile, which opened two years ago, also to premiere of a Star Wars movie.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER M. BJORNBERG/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

when they cross from Canton to Westland.

That stemmed from an idea pitched by Canton Township Supervisor Pat

Williams, who was surprised when he saw such a prominent marking on the floor containing the two communities' logos.

"I thought it would be neat," Williams said. "I was thinking a simple little sign hanging in the hallway there that says 'Westland' and 'Canton,' but when they came back with the logos on the floor, it blew my mind."

"It was so cool." Having the new screen located within the Westland city borders is an exciting proposition for the city, but Westland Mayor William Wild said it will do plenty to spur spending in both communities going forward.

"That's good for both of our communities," Wild said. "We draw from each other, and the more people that come to this theater, they're going to spend more in Canton and Westland and shop and eat dinner."

"So it's important for both of us." Contact reporter David Veselenak at dveselenak@hometownlife.com or 734-678-6728. Follow him on Twitter @davidveselenak.

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Auto show launches in Novi this weekend

David Veselenak HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

If you're missing that new car smell that usually comes to Detroit each January, the Suburban Collection Showplace has you covered.

The Novi convention center is preparing for the first Southeast Michigan Auto Show, which runs Friday to Sunday. There, visitors can check out nearly three dozen vehicle brands across the new event center and Hall A of the showplace, about 215,000 square feet dedicated to all things auto.

Unlike the other auto show highlighting the newest models that usually snags headlines this time of year, this auto show is designed more for consumers looking to purchase now, opting for models currently on sale.

"The main goal for the show is just to be consumer-focused," said McKenzie Bowman, a promoter with the auto show. "We're not going to be selling vehicles on the show floor, but it's an opportunity for families to come in and see over 35 brands under one roof and shop for what they're looking to purchase."

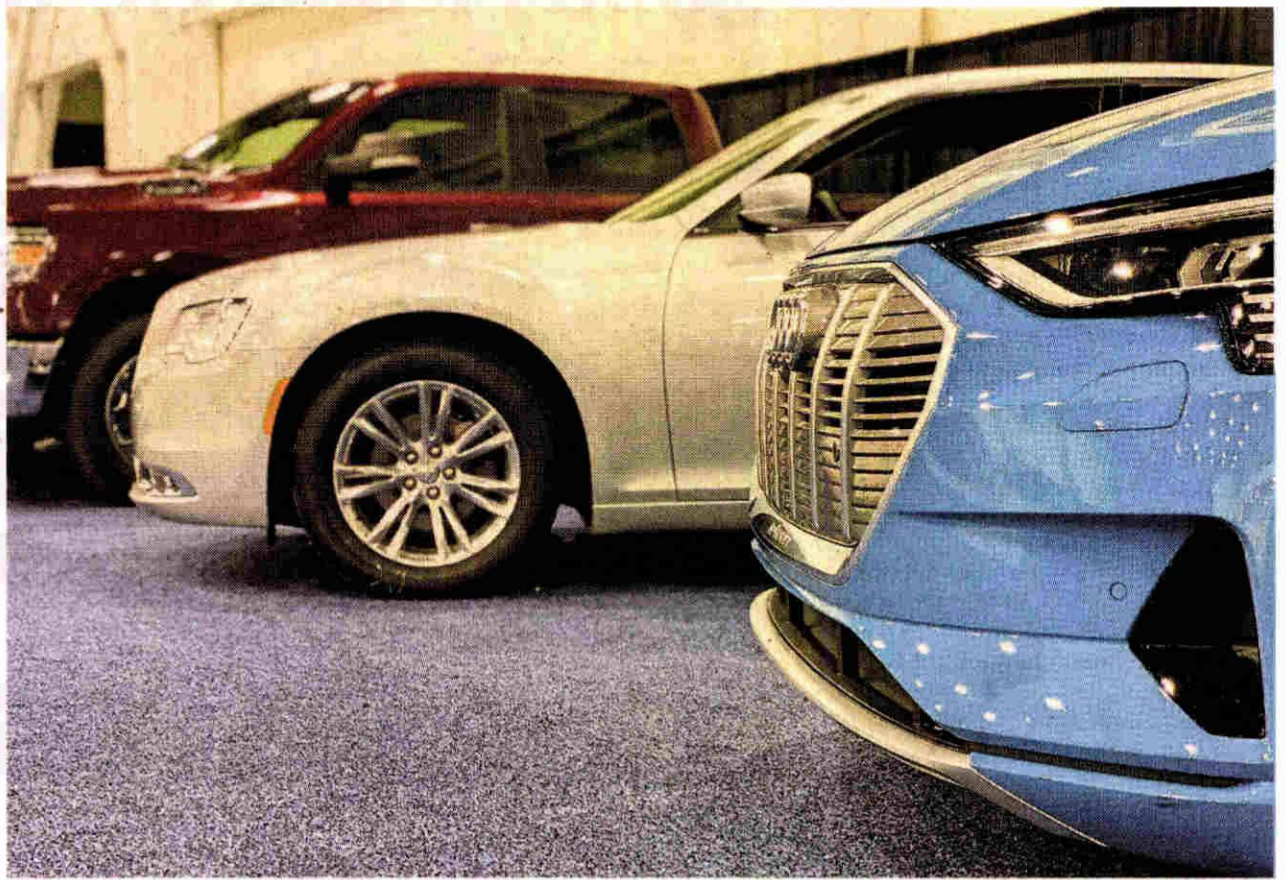
The show will feature brands such as Ford, Chrysler, GMC, BMW, Toyota, Nissan and Kia. For those with more refined tastes, several luxury brands will also have vehicles on display, including Maserati, Jaguar, Porsche, Rolls Royce and Ferrari.

"Each brand is invited to bring their show-stopping vehicle, be it a tricked-out version of something they have or a classic car," she said.

The show's inaugural year comes as the North American International Auto Show in downtown Detroit opted to move from its January time slot to June. The show has been discussed for about a year since the NAIAS announced its move.

Bowman said the new show is not a direct result of the changes to the NAIAS, but said it made logical sense for the Suburban Collection Showplace to add an auto show in January because it's such an important time of year for automakers.

"That's a pivotal time in the market," Bowman said. "That's when people are trying to sell their new models



The Southeast Michigan Auto Show will showcase more than 35 brands of vehicles this weekend in Novi.

COURTESY OF THE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN AUTO SHOW

and a lot of people are car shopping. So we were just going to capitalize on that time in the market."

The show is the first of its kind to happen in Novi, said Frank Novak, a marketing specialist with the Suburban Collection Showplace and the Southeast Michigan Auto Show.

While other car shows have focused on enthusiast groups and other activities, this show is the first to bring brand-new vehicles to the showroom floor in this way.

While the show has been planned for the last year, the majority of the work has taken place over the last six months. Crews at the center were preparing for the show before Christmas, laying out carpet and other flooring.

In addition to everyday vehicle names, several other companies will have a presence at the show, including Ferndale-based Bollinger Motors, which will showcase its Bollinger B1 and B2 electric trucks made from aluminum. Wixom-based Lingenfelter Performance Engineering will bring six vehicles, and Novi-based Kip Sheward Motorsports will bring several vehicles to the showroom floor.

For children, the auto show will feature a kids race-

track, a bounce house and face painting.

"If you're looking for a new vehicle, you can take your family and they would have something to do and you can also shop what kind of options there are to get a vehicle that fits," Novak said.

An invitation-only charity event will take place Friday to benefit the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

The show is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Tickets for the show are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-11. Children age 5 and under are free. Parking at the showplace is \$5 per car.

More information can be found on its website at southeastmichiganautoshow.com.

The showplace hopes to bring the auto show back again every January. Adding such an event, Bowman said, makes sense given the facility's moniker and close relationship with its namesake.

"We always knew it was an option with our relation to Suburban Collection, and we're always looking for new and exciting events," she said.

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

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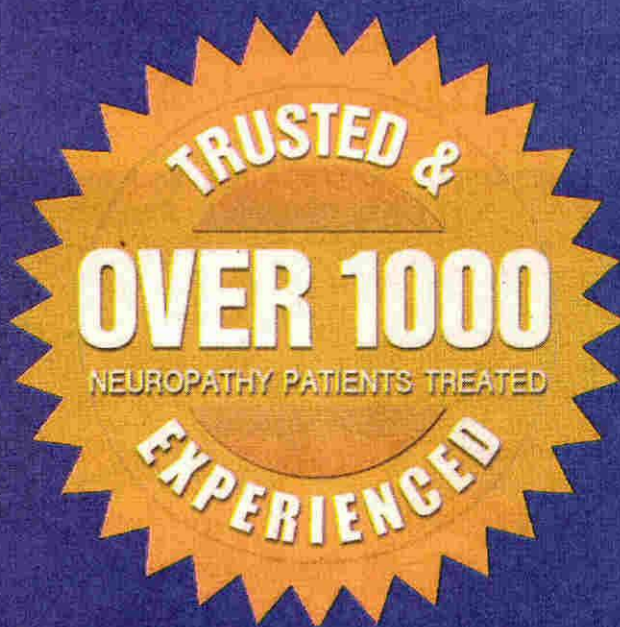
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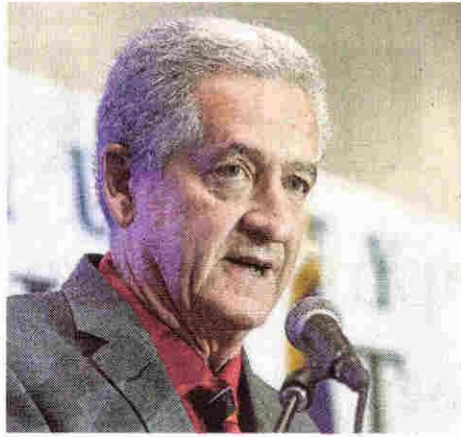
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Outgoing Livonia mayor: 'It's been a dream'

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN



Outgoing Livonia Mayor Dennis Wright speaks at the Livonia Prayer Breakfast.
HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE

"A dream. It's been a dream."
Livonia Mayor Dennis Wright's term in what he's repeatedly called his dream job is coming to an end, but the soon-to-be former mayor says he's proud of what's been done in the last four years.
"It's been a great ride, it really has," he said. "People ask me what the best part of the job is, and I always answer it's helping people. That's been the cool part."

Some of the top accomplishments that come to his mind are the Amazon warehouse, built in 2017; Livonia being one of the top zip codes in the country; a universally-accessible playground, built in 2018; and the Moving Vietnam Memorial Wall this past summer.

He said none of that would have gotten done without the city's staff, adding that he will miss the constant meeting of minds.

"The teamwork between the differ-

ent departments is something I'll miss," Wright said. "The police department, the fire department, the department of public works, it's all in just making stuff happen. ... It really one big family."

Wright also thinks his work ethic and

dedication to people has helped him. He learned that work ethic as a 15-year-old working in a fruit market in Detroit.

"I worked like a dog. I had to quit it because my grades were slipping," Wright said. "I was working like 50 hours a week plus doing school. It was a challenge trying to make everything balance."

He worked as a mechanic in the Air Force during the Vietnam War and became the owner of Wright's Hardware in Livonia before taking office as the city's treasurer.

"My staff that worked for me there were just terrific," Wright said of his time as treasurer. "I had like six women working for me there. They were the best."

When he landed in the mayor's office, Wright found another challenging job that he really loved. He said he would have tried to keep the momentum going and run for a second term, but health issues made that impossible.

"I wanted to put in a second term but

I didn't think it was right," he said. "I have been diagnosed with Parkinson's and I didn't feel it was right to run for a four-year term that I didn't know if I could fulfill it. I didn't think that would be fair to the city or the people."

He thinks the city will be in fine hands with its first woman to be elected mayor - Maureen Miller Brosnan.

"Maureen will do just fine," he said. "I have no doubt. She's a very open-minded person and she's got some of my fortes to work with. With the mix of those together, she'll be very good."

Wright said he, like the city's other living former mayors, will always be a resource for Brosnan.

He won't just be waiting around in case she calls, however; after taking a break for maybe "a couple of days," Wright plans to find a new job and continue to work as long as he can.

"I can always go back and work in a hardware store if I have to," he joked. "I'm sure something's out there one way or another."

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Wayne Police introduce therapy dog Zeke

Susan Vela HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The Wayne Police Department now has a certified therapy dog. His name is Zeke, and he is a very good boy.

Zeke will be available to accept head pats and provide friendly tail wags to anyone who asks.

Although everyone at the Wayne Police Department loves their profession, law enforcement can be extremely stressful, officers noted, since they are exposed to constant trauma over the course of their careers.

Zeke will be there to reduce stress for officers and other staff. Zeke is part of a larger officer wellness initiative the Wayne Police Department began earlier in 2019, with the belief that the healthier the police department is, the better it is

able to serve the public.

Zeke is also capable of helping crime victims who might come into the station stressed or uneasy. As Zeke acclimates to his new role, he may be seen around town.

In the meantime, feel free to stop by the police department and say hello. Please keep in mind that Zeke maintains a strict napping schedule.

Zeke is certified through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD), an international therapy dog organization that provides testing and certification for therapy dog teams. ATD requires obedience testing, veterinarian certification, and observation from trained tester/observers in various settings.

In addition to his certification, Zeke also completed 24 weeks of obedience training.



The Wayne Police Department has welcomed Zeke, a therapy dog, into its ranks to help law enforcement personnel handle stressful days. COURTESY OF WAYNE POLICE

Livonia troop promotes six to Eagle Scout rank

Six members of Boy Scout Troop 270 in Livonia out of Rosedale Gardens Presbyterian Church celebrated their long efforts to reach Eagle Scout status Dec. 15 during an Eagle Court of Honor ceremony.

Each Scout - Kenneth Astorino, Devin Brining, Nicholas Brosky, Andrew Erickson, Ethan Stack and Jacob Wright - had his own Eagle project.

Astorino's project was painting the outside walls of the building at the VFW Post 6695 in Plymouth. The post was thankful for this sprucing up.

Brining's project was performing maintenance and sign installation and painting two porches for one of the buildings at Greenmead Historical Village in Livonia. The buildings now all have signs describing their history.

Brosky's project was making fleece tie blankets to donate to the oncology department at St. Mary's Hospital for patients receiving chemo treatments.

Erickson's project was building three



Boy Scout Troop 270 has six new Eagle Scouts: Kenneth Astorino, Devin Brining, Nicholas Brosky, Andrew Erickson, Ethan Stack and Jacob Wright.

COURTESY OF MICHELLE WRIGHT

wooden picnic tables for Freedom House Refugee Center in downtown Detroit.

Stack's project was building 11 bat houses for Rotary Park in Livonia. These

were then mounted in various locations in the park in the hope that bats would use these and help reduce the mosquito population.

Wright's project was scraping, paint-

ing both sides of the fencing and replacing rotting boards or missing boards near the Alexander Blue House in front of the chapel at Greenmead Historical Village in Livonia.

Retirees suing MEA to stop health plan changes

Carol Thompson [Lansing State Journal](http://LansingStateJournal.com)
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

LANSING - Michigan Education Association retirees have sued the union to block impending changes to their health care plans.

Costlier plans would be "devastating" to the union's retired employees, said Retired Staff Association President Mary Anne Adams.

"These are benefits that were promised, and these are benefits that folks anticipated having into their retirement because they were promised for life," Adams said. "They should be honored and not unilaterally changed."

MEA officials say the move is necessary to combat the rising cost of health care and prescription drugs. In a July letter to retirees, association leaders said they are discontinuing programs that "are antiquated, expensive and threaten to destabilize our plan."

The Retired Staff Association represents about 560 retirees of the MEA, the Michigan Education Special Services Association and MEA Financial Services.

In early 2019, retirees' prescription drug plans shifted from the Michigan Education Special Services Association to a Medicare Part D arrangement administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the lawsuit states. That increased out-of-pocket costs and subjected higher-income retirees to a Medicare fee.

The MEA announced in July it would implement more changes to benefits plans in September. After RSA threatened to sue, the organization delayed those changes until Jan. 1.

The retirees' union has filed a suit in federal court to block the impending changes.

"We attempted to talk to the employers, and they have gone forward with the unilateral decision," Adams said. "That is what has forced us to court."

Collective bargaining agreements struck between MEA and the retirees promised specific hospital, surgical, medical, vision, dental and prescription drug coverage for those workers, the retirees' complaint states. The retirees' union argued those agreements are binding for life.

Rising costs of prescriptions and



Changes to the benefits of Michigan Education Association retirees could cost them more money.

LANSING STATE JOURNAL FILE

medical care caused the MEA to pursue changes to retiree benefits, MEA Public Affairs Director Doug Pratt said. The changes are expected to save MEA nearly \$92 million in long-term costs.

"This isn't a unique experience," he said. "We need to take action to ensure that our plans remain sustainable for years to come, not only for our current retirees but also our employees who hope to have these benefits in retirement."

Continuing to provide retiree benefits at their current levels is not feasible, Pratt said.

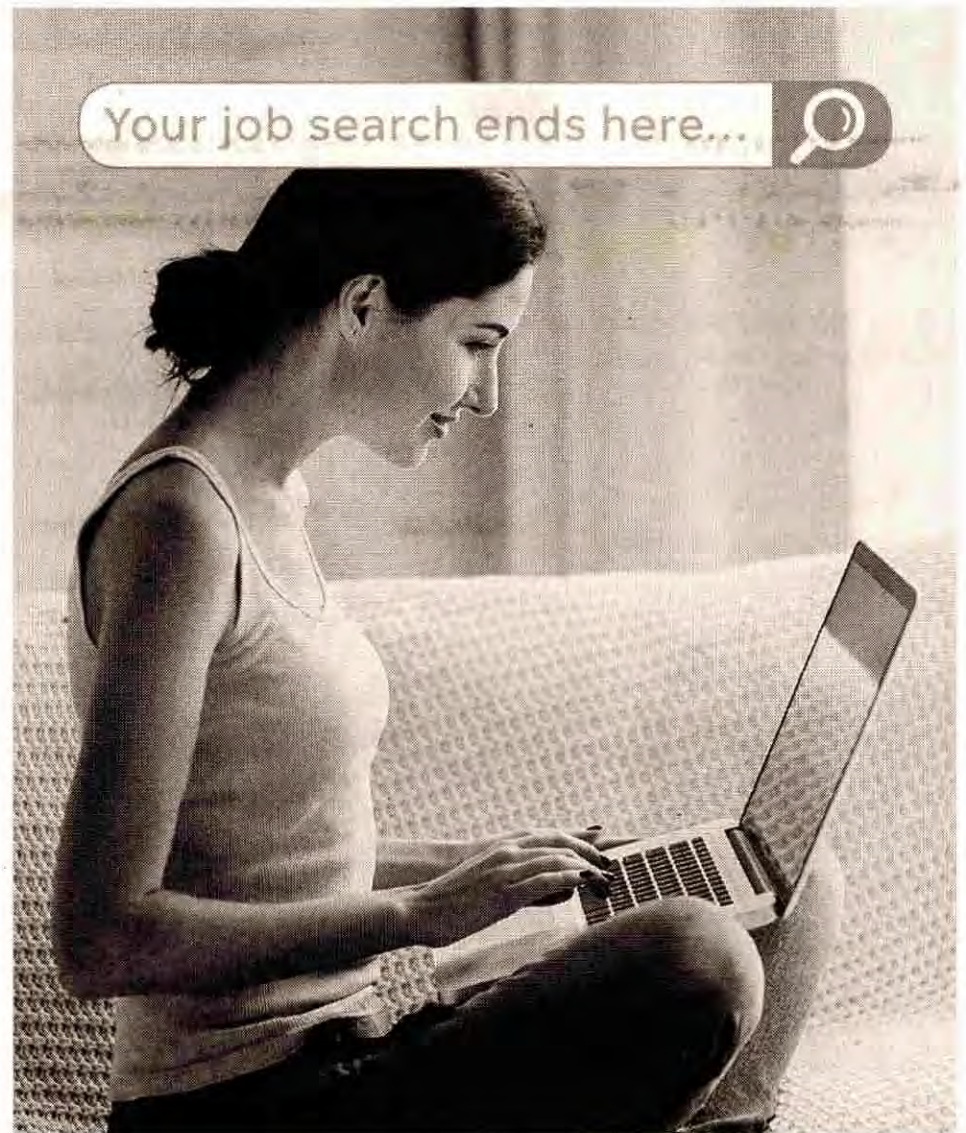
"A fifty-cent drug card with today's prescription prices is a really expensive benefit that's just no longer sustainable," he said, referencing the low prescription drug co-pays offered to some retirees.

Neither Pratt nor Adams provided an estimate of what the benefit changes could cost individual retirees.

The conflict is the latest in a series of disputes about employers' abilities to fund guaranteed retiree pension and health care benefits.

State and municipal governments, including some in Michigan, are facing a pension crisis as public employers are unable to follow through on funding benefit programs they once promised to employees.

The state overhauled its pension program for Michigan public school workers in 2012. Proponents of the overhaul said the savings would keep the pension system afloat, while teachers' groups and their supporters argued they were unfairly asked to shoulder the financial burden.



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Westland man wins big on 'Wheel of Fortune'

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Leon Wilborn said it was a dream to play on "Wheel of Fortune," but his winnings also helped make the experience unforgettable.

The Westland resident won \$59,700 in cash and other prizes on the episode that aired New Year's Eve, including a trip to the Florida Keys for two and a \$1,000 gift card for Furniture of America.

Wilborn said he plans to use some of his winnings to see the world.

"One thing I am planning to do is travel," he said. "I'm taking my sister on a trip that she's wanted to go to her whole life. ... I'm also planning to visit Japan in 2021, which is something I've wanted to do since I was 8."

Wilborn, a long time fan of the show, appeared on the second night of the show's "America's Game"-themed week.

The show Wilborn played on featured New Year's Eve-themed puzzles.

"It was so surreal to me," he said. "It took me a while to process that I actually went on there and won."

Though things can change at any time on a game like "Wheel of Fortune," Wilborn maintained a comfortable lead throughout most of the game.

"To be perfectly honest, I was totally not expecting to win," he said. "I was just happy to go on. So, when I made it to the final round I was just completely taken aback."

He said the secret to his success was forgetting the TV cameras and pretending like he was just watching at home.

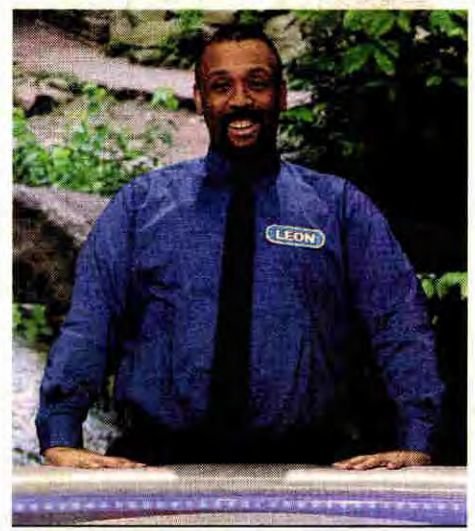
To prepare, he watched a lot of episodes and played on the game's app.

"It felt like I was at home playing the game almost," Wilborn said. "The fact that I was actually filming this for national television did not occur to me."

Before the show aired, Wilborn said it was a special experience to play on the show and meet its longtime host, Pat Sajak, along with longtime staple Vanna White.

"It's amazing to think that I actually got this opportunity," he said. "...there's been a lot of major changes in my life and this is a great way to end the year. This is something I will definitely never forget."

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



Westland resident Leon Wilborn won \$59,700 playing "Wheel of Fortune." COURTESY OF CAROL KAELSON

Livonia council rejects raise for itself, but others get bump

Shelby Tankersley Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Starting in 2020, all Livonia officials except city council members will get a 4.5 percent raise over a two-year period.

Council approved the raises Dec. 16 but rejected the suggested pay increase for council members and the council president in a 7-0 vote. Council made a similar decision in 2017.

The suggested raises came from the Local Officer Compensation Commission, which meets once every two years to determine the pay of the city's elected officials.

Councilwoman Cathy White suggested the partial rejection.

The raise would have given Council President-elect Kathleen McIntyre \$18,889 in 2020 and \$19,362 in 2021 and given the rest of council \$17,615 in 2020 and \$18,055 the following year. Instead, the council president will continue to make \$18,519 annually and council members will make \$17,270 annually.

"For the mayor and the treasurer and the clerk, I don't have an issue with it.

On the council side, we're not underpaid by any means," Councilman Scott Bahr said. "I think what we make is fair."

Councilman Brandon Kritzman, who will not be on council next year, suggested his colleagues take the raise. Glen Long Jr., chair of the compensation committee, suggested the council take the raise, as well.

One resident who did not identify herself took issue with the mayor's salary, which will be \$127,500 in 2020 and about \$130,688 in 2021.

Several council members argued that one should think of the office and not the officeholder.

"We have what's called a strong mayor form of government," McIntyre said. "It has nothing to do with the individual who holds the office. It means that we don't have a city manager. Most communities of our size have a mayor and a city manager."

The approved raises will give Clerk Susan Nash and Treasurer Lynda Scheel about \$87,450 in 2020 and \$89,943 in 2021.

New year means it's time to review finances



Money Matters
Rick Bloom
Guest columnist

Happy New Year!

As we enter 2020, we will all face our fair share of challenges when it comes to personal finances. My goal in writing this column is to tackle a variety of issues that affect your finances and to provide you the best independent information I can. Of course, it's important to remember that you should apply the information to your individual situation.

When it comes to understanding your personal financial situation, review and redefine your individual goals and objectives from an investment standpoint. To be successful when it comes to investing, you must be able to articulate what you're looking for from your money. It is important to also know the time frame you have to achieve those goals.

For example, if you're saving for retirement and retirement is 20 years down the road, your portfolio would be different than if you were planning to retire next year.

I have always told investors that age is relatively immaterial when it comes to investing because it does not tell you what you should do with your money; it's your goals and objectives that define how you invest.

If you're 90 years old and you're saving for college for a brand-new great-grandson, your portfolio should mostly contain equity type investments. On the other hand, if you are 60 years old and need income from your portfolio, your portfolio should contain a sufficient amount of bonds and fixed income investments.

This is a great time of year to make sure you know what you're trying to achieve with your portfolio.

Establishing your risk tolerance level goes hand in hand with establishing your goals and objectives. Risk tolerance is not based upon age but upon time and comfort.

Every investment has risk. The key is to understand that risk and make sure your portfolio is diversified from a risk standpoint.

As I mentioned, risk is a function of time. The stock market may be risky and volatile if your goals are one year down the road. On the other hand, the market is a lot less risky if you're looking 15-20 years down the road.

That is why goals and objectives are so important - they also help you in establishing your risk tolerance level.

Every investment has risk. When it comes to risk, most people only consider principle fluctuation as risk. Unfortunately, it's not that simple.

Even investments like CDs and U.S. treasuries have risks to them. No, the U.S. government is not going to default on its obligations, and yes, CDs are insured which means you are going to get your money.

The risk in these investments is that the interest rate is extremely low, which means by the time you pay your taxes and factor in the increased cost of living, your investment is actually losing money when it comes to purchasing power.

I think we can all accept that things are more expensive than they were 20 years ago, and things will be more expensive 10 years from now than they are today. If it costs you \$3,000 a month to live today, I can guarantee that 10 years from now your cost of living will be substantially higher. As a result, if your investments don't reflect that reality, you may find that down the road you have the same amount of money; however, it buys substantially less.

As we enter 2020, before we review our individual investments, it is important to first review our overall strategy and what we're trying to achieve with our money. After all, investing is sort of like planning a vacation. When we plan a vacation, we don't pack first and then decide where we want to go. Rather, we decide where we want to go and what we're going to do, and then we pack accordingly. The same thing applies to your investments.

Before you go out and buy investments, you first have to know what your goals and objectives are for that money.

Good luck!
Rick Bloom is a fee-only financial advisor. His website is bloomassetmanagement.com. If you would like Rick to respond to your questions, email rick@bloomassetmanagement.com.



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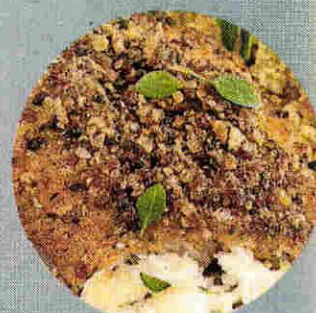
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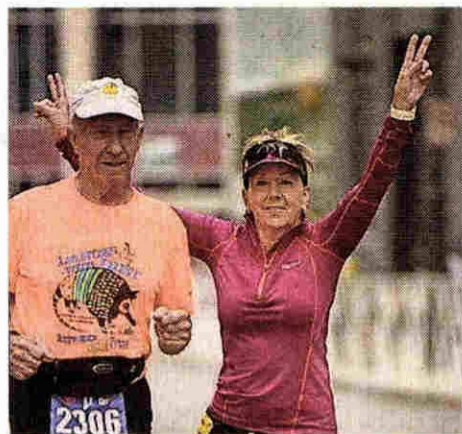


Sports

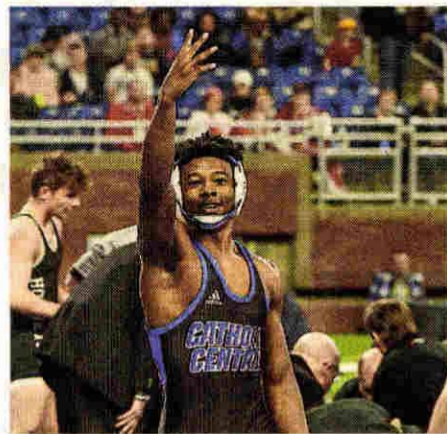
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Twins Jenna, left, and Maya Millis both contribute to Stevenson football. Jenna is a varsity cheerleader and Maya is the team's extra point kicker.



Bob Ranta, 87, of South Lyon, and his niece, Sandy Logan, 57, of Northville, run in the Detroit Free Press Marathon. SUBMITTED



Catholic Central's Kevon Davenport won his fourth state wrestling title. COURTESY OF SCOTT CONFER

Butcher gets 300th hoops win to carry on tradition

Colin Gay Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Denny Butcher comes from a basketball family. His father, Donnie, played in the NBA for the New York Knicks and the Detroit Pistons from 1961-66, coaching the Pistons from 1967-68. His brother, also named Donnie, played basketball at Auburn.

Basketball seemed to be ingrained in Denny Butcher's blood, and he followed in his father's footsteps. After 27 years as a head boys basketball coach in Michigan, making stops at Orchard Lake St. Mary's, Brandon, Walled Lake Central, Hartland and, for the past five years, Walled Lake Western, Butcher has reached 300 wins in his career.

Butcher had the opportunity to accomplish his 300th win during the 2018-19 season. But with the Warriors ending the season with losses to South Lyon and Milford, the head coach had to wait until Dec. 10 - a 57-48 victory against Plymouth Christian Academy - to get the milestone.

"I got so many texts from the members of the team that had graduated - we graduated the whole starting five last year," Butcher said. "They were texting me how excited they were and disappointed that they could not get it done for me last year."

Butcher played basketball for Lakeland High School and continued at Orchard Lake St. Mary College under head coach Glen Donahue, a Michigan Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Famer with more than 800 career wins.

Butcher learned a lot playing for Donahue, crediting his college coach for teaching him how to structure practice and perfecting the discipline of game preparation, looking at the game differently than a player does.

But Butcher always wanted to be on the court, not the sideline.

"I wanted to be a player my whole life," Butcher said. "I wanted to be like my dad. It wasn't in my cards, I just wasn't good enough."

Whether it was coaching for eight seasons at Walled Lake Central or coaching in his fifth season for the Vikings' rival Walled Lake Western, Butcher has found a home in the area.

"The Walled Lake community, in general, from a family atmosphere, the whole district is just wonderful to be a part of," Butcher said. "Great people, great administration, hard-working people."

Butcher said he is not in the coaching business for the money. He called basketball coaching the most pure form of coaching, accounting for the amount of time and energy it takes to perform well.

Growing up in a basketball family, Butcher's father knew what his son was going through.

"My father has unfortunately passed away," Butcher said. "He would love to come to my games back at St. Mary's and Walled Lake Central, and just see the joy from the kids' eyes and to see it run in my family too."

Contact reporter Colin Gay at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Twitter @ColinGay17.

A year of champions



Mercy volleyball coach Loretta Vogel, left, and her team won the state title this past season. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS

Local high school teams won 15 state titles in 2019

Philip Allmen Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

It's been an exciting sports year in Hometown Life land.

The northwest metro Detroit area saw plenty of success in the high school varsity sports world with a quite a few state titles.

Detroit Catholic Central and Detroit Country Day each won the championship in their respective divisions for ice hockey. Mercy High School and Birmingham Seaholm each brought home a state title for girls swim and dive.

Farmington gymnastics, Catholic Central wrestling, Harrison High bowling, Brother Rice lacrosse, Marian soccer, Novi girls soccer, Country Day girls tennis, Academy of the Sacred Heart girls tennis, Northville girls golf, Marian Girls golf, Mercy volleyball

Some other teams came oh so close. Detroit Country Day advanced to the state football finals. Brother Rice reached the state semifinals in baseball. Westland John Glenn reached the state semifinals in wrestling. Wayne Memorial girls basketball fell in the state semifinals, as did the Salem boys and John

Glenn girls bowling teams. Milford, Lakeland and Birmingham girls skiing reached the state finals along with Bloomfield Hills boys skiers. Birmingham Groves boys swim and dive reached the finals before falling to perennial powerhouse Dexter.

Catholic Central and Marian reached the finals in lacrosse, and Birmingham girls and Cranbrook Kingswood girls made it to the semifinals, but all fell short on claiming the title.

Plymouth girls soccer reached the

See CHAMPIONS, Page 2B



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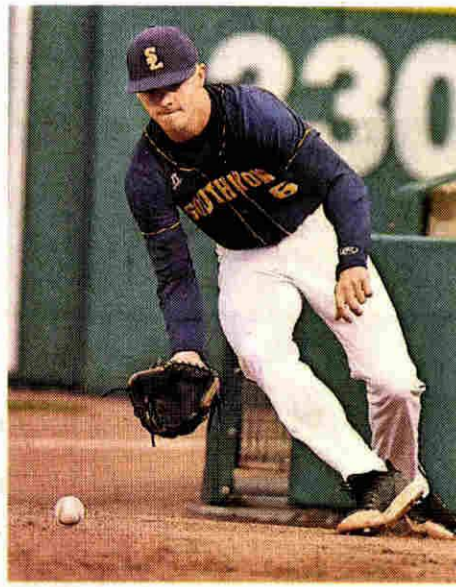


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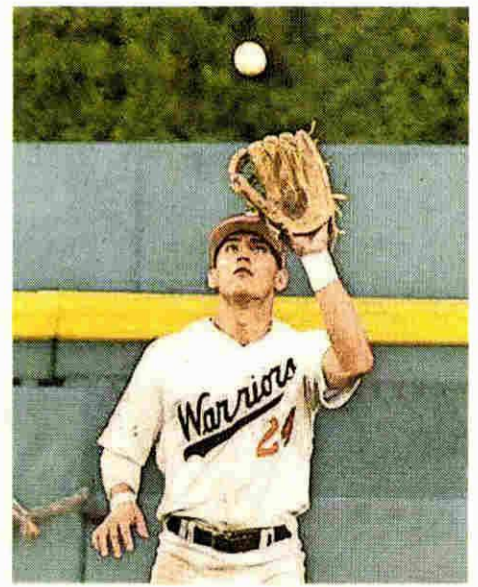
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Members of the Novi girls soccer team prepare plant a few kisses on their trophy. They won the state title this past season. HOMETOWNLIFE.COM FILE PHOTOS



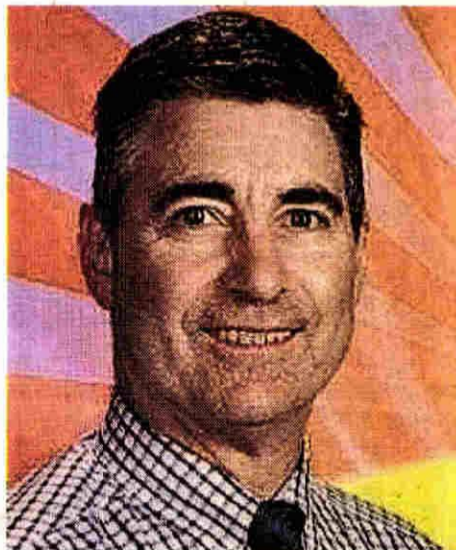
South Lyon right fielder Nate Logan gets ready to scoop up a base hit that reached him in foul territory during the MHSAA All Star Game.



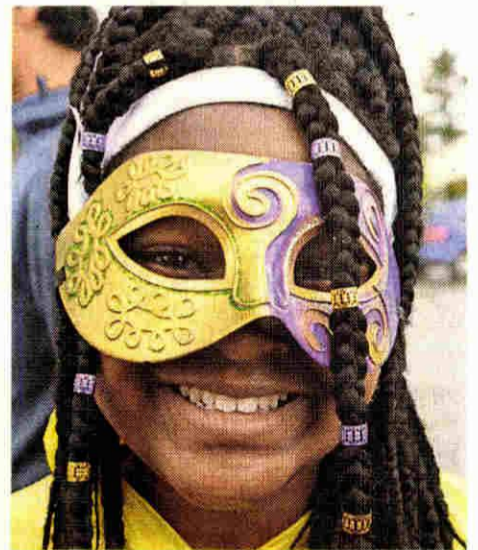
Brother Rice's Tito Flores locks a pop-up into his mitt while playing center field during the all-star game.



Detroit Country Day players crash into the O-line of Grand Rapids Catholic Central during their Division 4 MHSAA state final. Country Day lost, 44-0.



Former Stevenson High hockey coach and Redford Union High administrator Mike Humitz died Jan. 1, 2019, at 54. SUBMITTED



Farmington High freshman Jasmine Ajagbe wears a Mardi Gras-style mask for the school's Homecoming Parade.

Champions

Continued from Page 1B

finals, too, before a loss to Novi, one of the top teams in the country.

In girls tennis, Bloomfield Hills, Seaholm and Cranbrook Kingswood all earned a spot in the state finals before falling to the eventual champions. South Lyon girls golf and Cranbrook Kingswood boys tennis each reached the finals but couldn't eke out that last victory.

Individuals shined, as well, like Catholic Central's Kevon Davenport winning four straight individual wrestling titles, Plymouth's Carter Solomon winning the individual boys cross country championship or Northville's Emily Roden and Mercy's Greta Gidley winning individual swim titles, to name a few.

There's been a lot of excitement internally, too. Why? It's a new sports staff. Longtime sports reporters Brad Emons, Marty Budner and Tim Smith accepted early retirement offers at the beginning of 2019.

Andrew Vaillencourt and Colin Gay have grabbed the baton in the local sports world. Vaillencourt started in February and Gay joined the team in August.

Vaillencourt, an Indiana Hoosier, can be reached at availlenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Follow him on Twitter @AndrewVcourt. Gay, an Ohio State Buckeye, can be reached at cgay@hometownlife.com or 248-330-6710. Follow him on Twitter @ColinGay17.

General sports information, stats and game results can be sent to livsports@hometownlife.com (both Andrew and Colin will receive the email) and also follow @htlsports on Twitter to catch all the sports updates.

Top 10 stories of 2019

We appreciate our sports readers who helped make 2019 our strongest one yet. Online, we had more readers than ever, something we expect to continue in 2020.

Here's a look at the most popular local sports stories read on hometownlife.com.

Farmington High Homecoming football game canceled after Pontiac incident

A shooting in Pontiac the day before the Farmington vs. Pontiac high school football game prompted Pontiac's decision to cancel its road game. Farmington proceeded with its homecoming activities like the parade and tailgate.

Farmington had two bye weeks this season, a relatively uncommon happening. The Falcons earned a spot in the playoffs, beating North Farmington in the opening round before falling to U of D Jesuit in the district finals.

Detroit Catholic Central soccer forfeits seven games after self-reporting

ineligible player

The private high school in Novi contacted the Michigan High School Athletic Association this fall to report the school had an ineligible player on its soccer team at the beginning of the season. That resulted in the team — at the time ranked seventh in the state — forfeiting seven games.

The team showed plenty of success, earning a spot in the postseason regional finals where the Shamrocks lost to Novi High School.

Video of fight after Brother Rice-Catholic Central hockey game hits social media

Catholic schools have been in the news quite a bit in recent weeks for less than ideal reasons. Among them? A video circulating online apparently shows a brawl breaking out between students at Birmingham Brother Rice and Detroit Catholic Central following a Dec. 7 hockey game between the two schools at USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth.

Snapchat footage reposted on Twitter shows a group of students fighting, many wearing orange. Plymouth Township police were still investigating the incident. Catholic Central released a statement stating that "two of our students were attacked by a group of individuals who do not attend our school." Brother Rice declined to comment on the incident.

Michigan high school football playoff projections through week eight

With one week left in the regular season, everyone wanted to know whether or not their favorite team was poised to make the high school playoffs.

Livonia Stevenson twin sisters take on Friday night football as player, cheerleader

Twin sisters Maya and Jenna Millis prepared for Friday night football, hopeful for a Livonia Stevenson victory.

The twist — Maya plays on the football team, while Jenna is a member of the cheer team.

In Maya's first year on varsity football, she tallied 25 points: 22 extra points and a field goal.

"We've always been waiting for the year we're both on varsity and I can cheer her on," Jenna said. "It's so cool, all of my friends know she's my sister so when she kicks we all go crazy, it's so much fun."

Local baseball players shine in Michigan High School All-Star game at Comerica Park

It was a night to remember for the 50 Michigan High School baseball all-stars who closed out the season at Comerica Park in Detroit this past spring.

The East All-Stars came out victorious, defeating the West, 11-3.

Almost a dozen players from the Hometown Life coverage area participated in the game, nine on the East and two on the West. Two of the game's biggest contributors hailed from the Plymouth-Canton school district.

The East squad also featured two area coaches. Leading the East was Li-



Brother Rice's Mike Cosgrove runs by Catholic Central's Justin Petouhoff during the state title boys lacrosse game. DAVID DONOHER/SPECIAL TO HOMETOWNLIFE.COM

vonja Franklin's Matt Fournier, who was joined by John Glenn coach Lawrence Scheffer as an assistant.

To add even more local flavor, Novi's Sophie Psiakis sang the National Anthem and God Bless America.

This South Lyon man, 87, was in a class by himself at Free Press Marathon

Bob Ranta was in a class by himself at the Free Press Marathon Sunday as the only person age 80 or older to finish the race: 26.2 miles in a time of just under 8 hours, 19 minutes.

The race was his 21st Free Press Marathon, and his 91st marathon overall, which includes 26 ultra marathons, in 38 years of running. He has also run countless smaller races and also competes in triathlons, including four in 2019.

Salem interim AD Tim Baechler fires football coach Justin Reed

Losing seasons are never fun. After the Salem Rocks went a combined 2-16 in the past two seasons, Salem interim Athletic Director Tim Baechler fired coach Justin Reed. Injuries didn't help this fall; the entire JV team was promoted to the varsity team toward the end of the year.

Baechler was the Canton football coach for 20 seasons before retiring af-

ter the 2017 season. He took over as Salem AD after Brian Samulski left to take the same position this fall at Northville High.

Hockey community, Redford Union Schools mourn loss of Mike Humitz

It was a sad start to the new year when Mike Humitz, who had been gravely ill and fighting cancer in hospice, died New Year's Day. Humitz, who coached at Livonia Stevenson High for three seasons (2004-07), not only left a legacy in hockey, but also in education as an assistant principal at Redford Union High School.

MHSAA high school football playoff bracket announced

With the regular season over, the Michigan High School Athletic Association announced who made it to the playoffs with hopes of making it to Ford Field and a state title.

Locally, 15 teams earned a playoff berth. Only one, Country Day, made it to Ford Field, though the team fell short in the finals.

Starting next year, the MHSAA will use a new point system to determine the playoffs.

Contact content strategist Philip Allmen at pallmen@hometownlife.com. Follow us on Twitter @hometownlife and @htlsports.

Northville state champ swimmer eyes Olympics

Andrew Vaillencourt
HometownLife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Northville freshman swimmer Emily Roden is making waves.

In her first year as a high school swimmer, the young star captured first place in the 100 butterfly in the state finals to become a state champion. She recorded a 55.43 to secure the top spot.

A talented swimmer since she began swimming at Goldfish Swim School at age five, Roden rose quickly through the ranks to become one of the top area swimmers and member of the Novi Sturgeons club team, which she's been a part of since she was seven. Now at Northville High, she's a key member of the team that placed eighth in the state.

The 100 fly is her best event, recording a personal best in the KLAAs conference meet. However, she's had two chief competitors in her quest to be the state's 100 fly champion: freshman Rhian Russell from Rochester Adams and sophomore Brady Kendall from Plymouth.

Roden has been competing against the two swimmers for years now, especially Kendall. They traded victories during the season as Roden came out on top in a regular season dual-meet and Kendall winning at the conference finals. A year younger than Kendall and faced with another star freshman in Russell, Roden knew she'd have to be at her best to earn first place.

"I remember finishing and looking up at the board and seeing that I was in first, it was really exciting," Roden said. "Even though this is my first year in high school, I've been racing some of those girls during club season, so I knew some of them and to finally beat them was really exciting. When I got out of the water, all of my friends were around and they jumped on top of me and were screaming, it was one of the best feelings I've ever had in my entire life, just to feel the entire team behind you and see everyone so happy for you."

It was an incredible moment for Roden, who now knows she has the pressure of being a defending champion next year.

"Obviously I feel like I have to keep it now, since I'm a freshman there's only one way to go and that's down and I



Northville freshman swimmer Emily Roden won the state championship in the 100 fly. COURTESY OF BRIAN MCNEFF

don't want to do that," Roden said.

For the Mustangs, Roden also swims the 200 free and is part of the 400 free relay and 200 medley relay. She set a personal best of 1:51.60 in the 200 free during the conference championships, as well as a personal best 54.97 in the 100 fly.

Close with many of the older girls on the team, Roden said she hopes to someday be one of the upperclassmen that younger teammates can look up to the way she does Northville's current group of juniors and seniors.

"I came into high school not really knowing what to expect, but it was a lot of fun," Roden said. "A lot of my friends are older than me, so it's fun to be in relays with juniors and seniors. They really motivate you more and push you. I aspire to be like them and swim as fast as them."

She said she spent a lot of time during the high school season improving her turns and her lower body strength. Her coach, Brian McNeff, says she has a great work ethic and is a powerful swimmer.

"The way that she moves through the water, it looks a lot easier than other

people because of the strength that she has," McNeff said.

Being part of a team was a positive change as well after being used to the individual focus at the club level.

"I feel like the team atmosphere really changed me a lot because we're all motivating each other and not being so individualized, it's more team-oriented," Roden said. "It was a big change but I liked it a lot."

Roden has a lot still to accomplish in her high school career, but she does want to swim in college and has her eyes on an even bigger prize: the 2024 Olympics.

Her goal is to make the cut at Olympic trials and see where that takes her. McNeff said he absolutely believes it's something Roden can achieve, adding he wouldn't put a limit on anything she can do in the future.

Part of her love for swimming is tied to a former Olympic swimmer, Missy Franklin. Roden said she's always admired her, some of that stemming from a move called Touch The Wall, which features Franklin in her journey to the 2012 Olympics.

"She's great to have on the team,"

McNeff said. "She came in with a lot of hype, she had a lot of friends on the team that were telling me about her, so we knew the talent, but you never know what kind of trainer or type of person they are, but she was great right from the start. She works extremely hard at practice, fit in right away with the rest of the girls and always seemed like she was having a great time."

Now that the rest of the state is well aware of how talented she is, Roden will have a target on her back as other swimmers hope to take her spot as Michigan's best butterfly swimmer. That won't bother her, though. She plans to continue having fun and swimming fast.

"She's very humble," McNeff said. "She had no clue about where she was ranked going into the state meet or anything like that, she just wanted to swim fast and do what was best for the team, so I thought that was really cool. She really seems happy to be at the meets and be a part of the team, she wanted to have fun and swim fast."

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at availlenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

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Nation's largest fishing show coming to Novi

Andrew Vaillencourt
Hometownlife.com
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

The largest pure fishing show in the country returns to the largest freshwater fishing market in the country when the Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit drops anchor Jan. 9-12 at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

More freshwater fishing licenses are sold in metro Detroit than any other similar geographic region in the country. So it makes perfect sense that the largest pure fishing show in the country would set its hook in Metro-Detroit.

"With last year's expansion at Suburban Collection Showplace we've now got seven full acres of fishing boats, fishing tackle, fishing gear, fishing vacations, fishing seminars, and factory-direct exhibits," says Show Manager Ben Nielsen. "This show is perfect for anyone interested in fishing, from beginners to tournament pros."

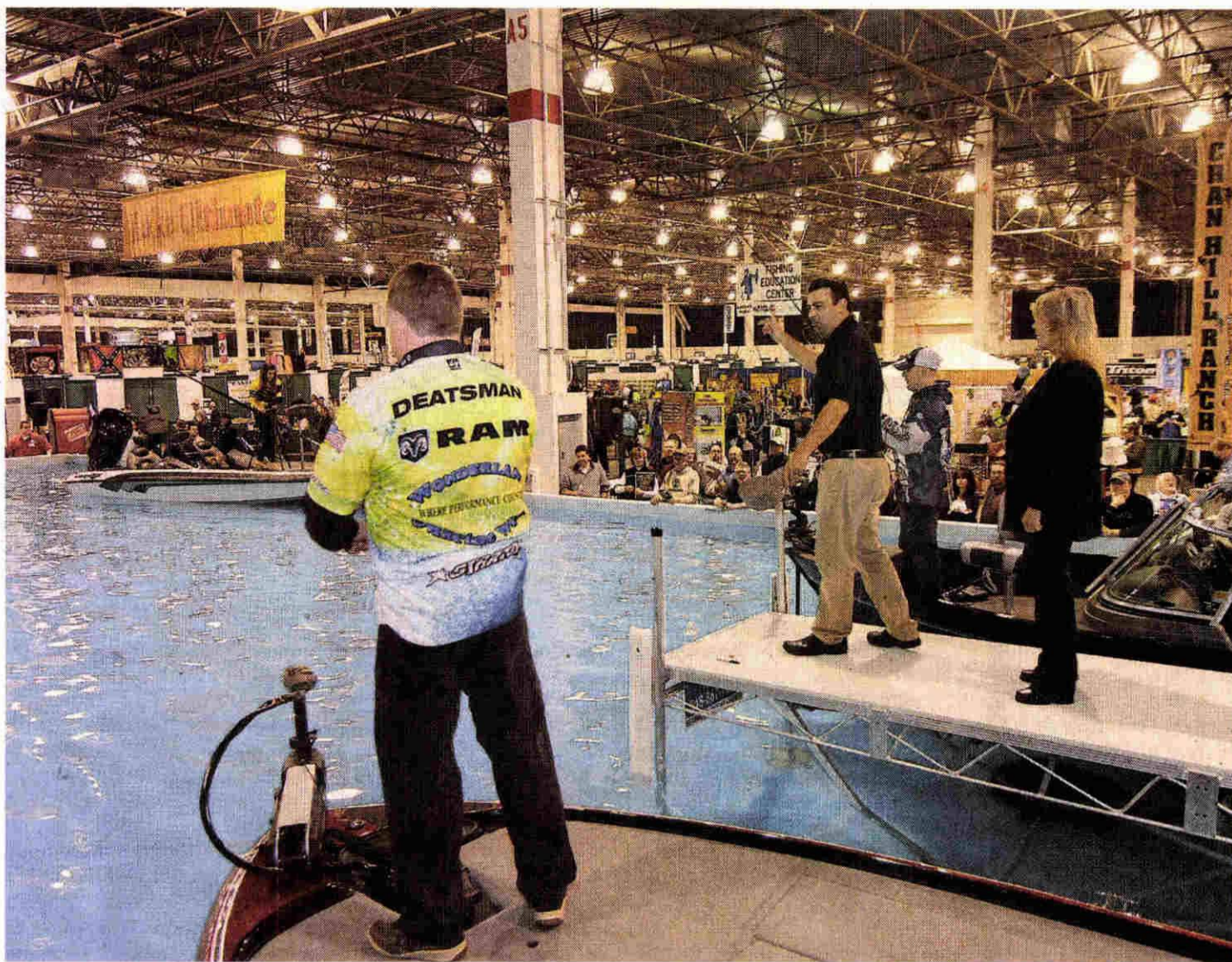
Looking for a fishing boat? Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit has over 250 different boats on display from 40 manufacturers so patrons can shop and compare. Get the best preseason deals and manufacturer rebates at the Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit.

"This is the place to buy your fishing boat," Nielsen says. "If you want a boat in the spring you need to order it in the winter to ensure spring delivery and the Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit is the place to find your best deal."

The Ultimate Fishing Show-Detroit is well known for its extensive seminar line-up presenting seminars every hour on five seminar stages including Lake Ultimate and the Hawg Trough. Nearly every Michigan game fish species will be covered - free with show admission.

Headlining this year's all-star seminar lineup are national bass fishing personalities and Michigan residents Kevin VanDam and Mark Zona. VanDam, a four time Bassmaster Classic Champ and seven time B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year, will make a special appearance on Thursday, Jan. 9, only. Zona, host of Zona's Awesome Fishing Show and a regular on several ESPN Outdoors shows, also will make a special appearance on Friday, Jan. 10, only.

Joining these two celebrities in the



The Ultimate Fishing Show is coming to Novi's Suburban Collection Showplace from Jan. 9-12. COURTESY OF BILL PARKER

seminar lineup are bass professionals Joe Thomas, Wayne Carpenter and Gerry Gostenik along with nationally acclaimed walleye experts Mark Martin, Mark Romanack and Lance Valentine, ice fishing specialist Brian "Bro" Brodahl and many other national and local fishing experts.

This year's show features the largest ice fishing display in the state at the greatly expanded Ultimate Ice Fishing Village. Along with a Shanty Truckload Sale, there also will be a vast variety of augers, electronics, tackle and gear for sale. Manufacturer exhibits from Clam, Otter, Ardisam (Eskimo), Frabill, Striker and more will be on hand all four days of

the show to answer questions and explain the features of their line of ice fishing equipment.

Some of the other highlights of the show include, Lake Ultimate, the Hawg Trough, Ultimate Bass, Walleye and Salmon Clinics, Fish Cleaning Demonstrations, a Virtual Fishing Simulator, a Stocked Trout Pond, Fly Casting and Fly Tying Lessons, Shore Lunch Fish Fry and much more.

Want to attend the show for free? On Thursday, Jan. 9, admission is free for patrons who bring six cans/boxes or four pounds of non-perishable food items to donate to the annual Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger food drive.

The food will be collected by volunteers from local conservation organizations and donated to the Red Cross and area food banks.

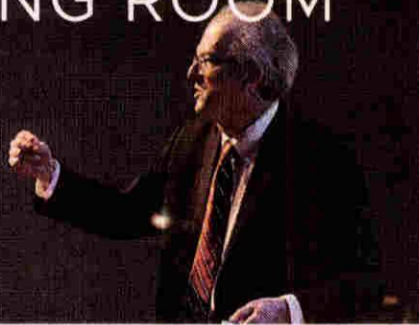
Show hours are: 1-9 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission: \$12 adults, \$5 children 6-14, free for children 5 and under. On-site parking is \$5.

For more information, visit www.ultimatefishingshow.com or call 800-328-6550.

Contact reporter Andrew Vaillencourt at avaiillenc@hometownlife.com or 810-923-0659. Send game results and stats to Liv-Sports@hometownlife.com.

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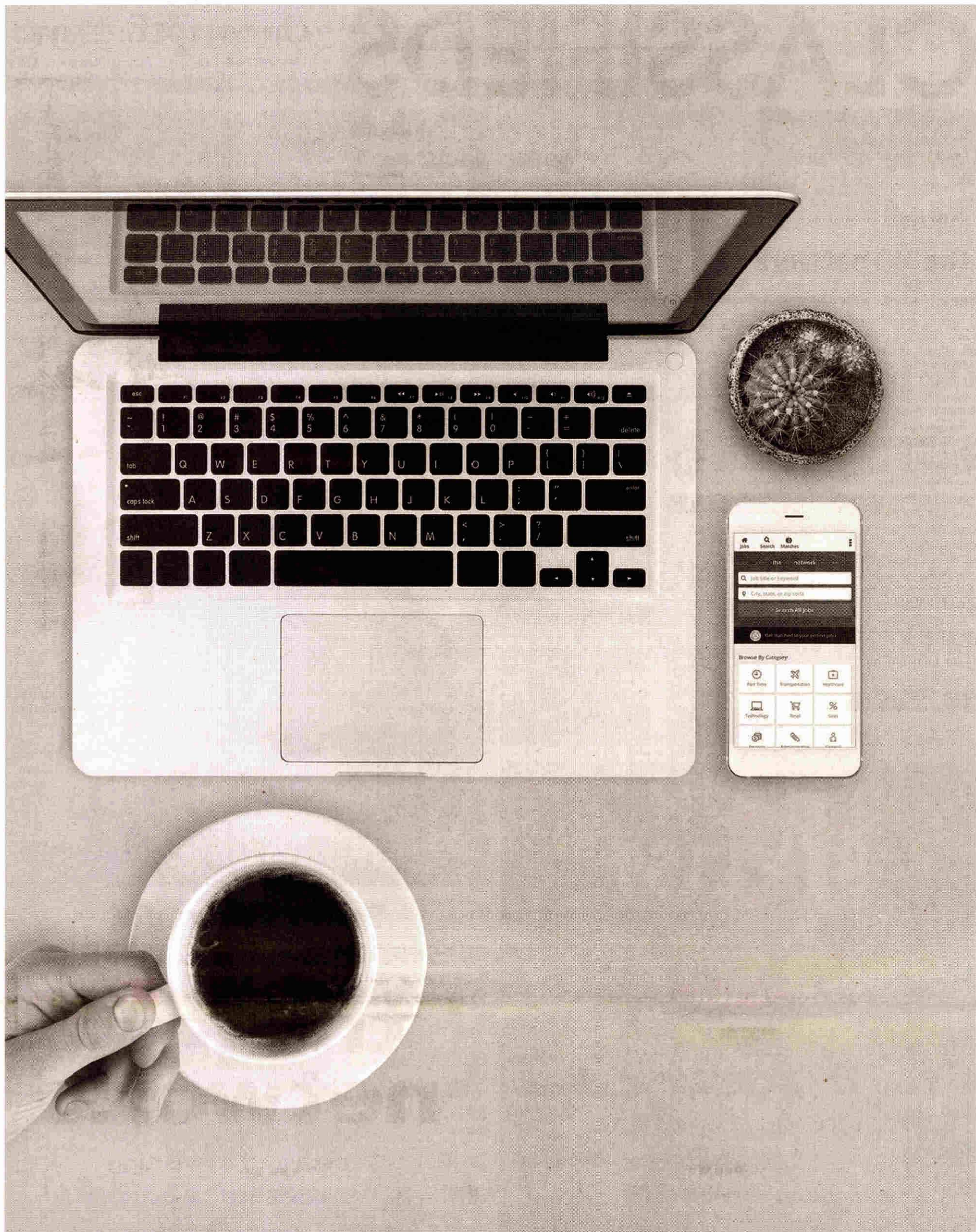
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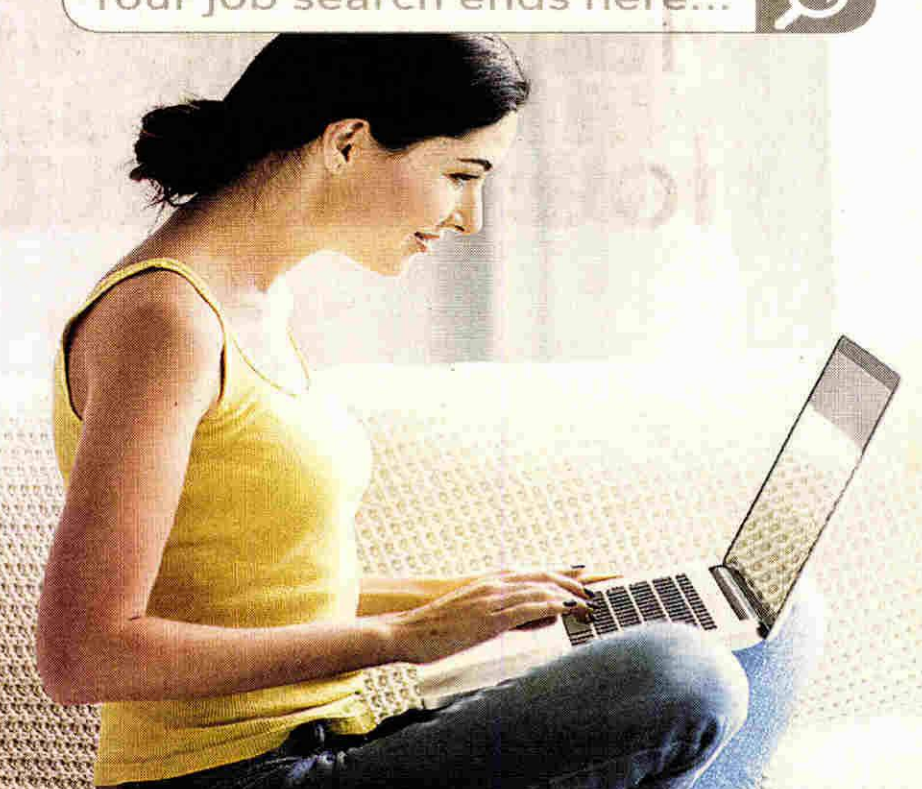
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