

PISTONS PIN COLLECTION!

COMING SUNDAY: IT ALL STARTS WITH A FREE COLLECTOR'S ALBUM. DETAILS, 3B

The Detroit News AND Free Press

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 A B C D E F

Metro final **

Saturday, February 12, 2005

50 cents



No Red Wings. But there's **still hockey**. In Plymouth, a team that includes an attorney, a car salesman and a schoolteacher **plays the game for nothing**. It's time to adopt a different kind of hockey team. **Meet the Rhinos...**

Your new heroes of Hockeytown

By SHAWN WINDSOR
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

WHY WE'RE ADOPTING THE RHINOS

This is Hockeytown, where Red Wings walk on hard water. But not this season, with the NHL lockout at Day 150. Still, we need our hockey fix. That's why the Free Press has adopted the American Transmissions Rhinos, 15 guys who play on one of the hundreds of recreational hockey league teams in metro Detroit.

For the next six weeks, reporter Shawn Windsor and photographer Rashaun Rucker will follow the Plymouth-based Rhinos as they seek the title in their eight-team league. You'll see stats, standings, injury updates and player profiles. Hey, we remember how to cover hockey!

WXYZ-TV (Channel 7) is joining the fun, too, so watch for reports on the news.

WHO'S TO BLAME? We want your opinion on the NHL lockout. **1B**

The goalie stops nearly every puck shot high on the glove side. He can also sell you a car.

The first line defenseman, the ageless wonder, plants himself like a white pine, using his size 14 skates to block pucks. He has used his off-ice legal skills to help some teammates divorce.

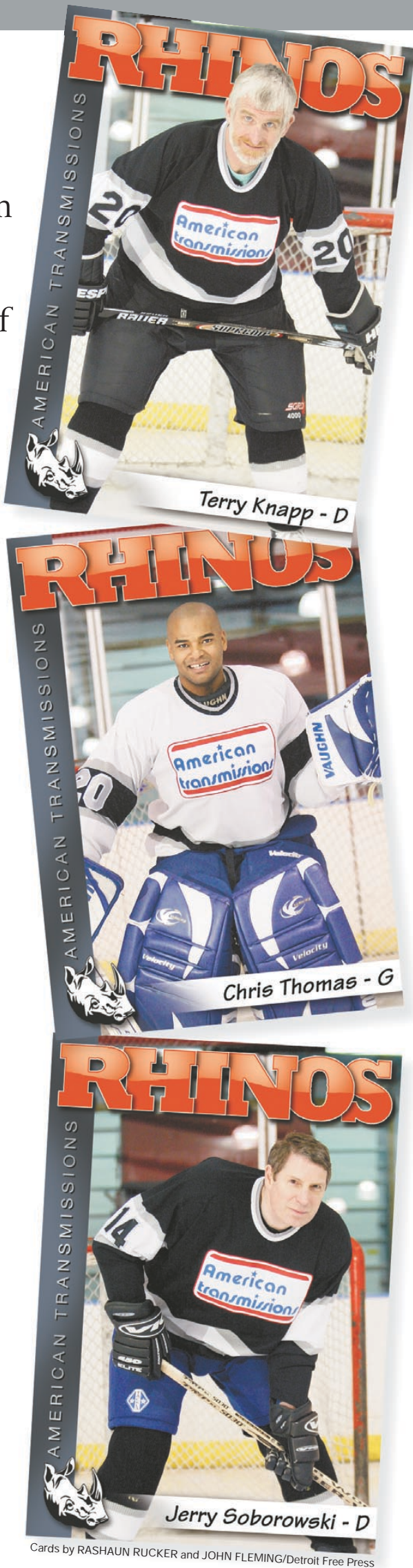
Another defenseman can crank a bullet slap shot, but when the games are done, and the boys head out for beers, he keeps them in line. He's a sheriff's deputy.

Joe Louis Arena has been too empty for more than four months now, and it's hard to imagine the Detroit Red Wings flying down the ice until at least next season — in fact, NHL officials say this weekend is the last chance to salvage the season.

But hockey flourishes in places where the lights are softer and contracts are not an issue. Hundreds of recreation league teams fill dozens of ice rinks daily in southeastern Michigan. They are sponsored by repair shops, bars, restaurants and auto dealerships. They play in hour-long slots that stretch past midnight, blade to ice, stick to puck, some slowly, some swiftly, all for the indescribable pleasure of gliding on frozen water.

The American Transmissions Rhinos are just such a team. (The Rhinos no longer have a formal sponsor because their founder retired, but they still play with jerseys bearing the company logo.) Most of the players have been

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Cards by RASHAUN RUCKER and JOHN FLEMING/Detroit Free Press

UNDER THE INFLUENCE | PART 3 OF 3

State beer, wine dealings done secretly

Wholesalers' private meetings violated the law, experts say

By JENNIFER DIXON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Last fall, Michigan's beer and wine distributors had some urgent business to discuss with the state's Liquor Control Commission, the agency that regulates their industry.

But rather than explore the issues in a public forum, the Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association arranged a private meeting on Oct. 6 to discuss their concerns about how the commission might act on a variety of policies and regulations.

The next day, Dennis Hybarger, the association's vice president, thanked the commissioners, writing: "While every matter wasn't finalized, we were very happy with the open and considered discussions that took place."

Last October's meeting wasn't the first time the wholesalers met

A SPECIAL REPORT

Inside: Northwest Airlines is one of the world's biggest air carriers. But it was no match for the power of the Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association. **8A**
On the Web: Read the first two installments at www.freep.com
Letters: Readers write. **12A**

secretly with the commission.

Records obtained by the Free Press under the state's Freedom of Information Act show that a commission quorum — at least three of its five members — has met behind closed doors with the wholesalers or their chief lobbyist four times since November 2003. They discussed what the commission was doing on policy matters, the records show.

Legal experts said the private sessions violate the state's Open Meetings Act.

Commission Chairwoman Nida

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Records show that Liquor Control Commissioner Patrick Gagliardi, right, attended more than one private meeting with beer and wine wholesalers.



Photos by HUGH GRANNUM/Detroit Free Press



Liquor commission Chairwoman Nida Samona, left, defended the private meetings, saying regulators were merely hearing the opinions of wholesalers.

Compuware's IBM battle heads for a trial Tuesday

By JEWEL GOPWANI
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

After millions of dollars spent in legal fees and three years of painstaking litigation, a festering battle between Compuware Corp. and technology giant IBM Corp. is coming to a federal courtroom in Detroit next week.

Absent a last-minute settlement, the Detroit computer software and services company will take on Big Blue, the company that helped define the way people use computers.

The trial is to start Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Detroit before Judge George Steeh.

A six-member jury is to decide if IBM stole information about Compuware's software, sold it as its own products, infringed on Compuware's copyrights and undercut Compuware's prices. The trial is expected to last about six weeks.

At issue is the software that large companies and government agencies use for their mainframe computers that IBM makes. The

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KATHLEEN WAYT/Detroit Free Press
Arthur Miller speaks at his alma mater, the University of Michigan, on Feb. 16, 2004.

ARTHUR MILLER | 1915-2005

Playwright enriched nation's identity

By MARTIN F. KOHN
FREE PRESS THEATER CRITIC

Arthur Miller wrote his first plays as a University of Michigan undergraduate and went on to be acclaimed as America's greatest playwright. Miller, who died of heart failure Thursday night at age 89, would probably object to the preceding sentence, however: He hated the glib synopsis, the easy summation, especially when it came to his plays.

"I think that if it is easy to understand why a play has endured,

it won't endure," Miller told the Michigan Quarterly Review for the special issue devoted to him in 1998. "If you can explain it in two sentences, then it has the appearance of a rigid formula and falls apart."

"Death of a Salesman" and "The Crucible," the most-praised of Miller's two dozen plays — both of which drew their inspiration from Miller's critical view of America — were written more than 50 years ago, but Miller remained a vigorous writer into his late 80s.

His most recent play, "Finishing the Picture," had its premiere last year at Chicago's Goodman Theatre. The story of a troubled movie and its glamorous, famously difficult star, it appeared to be based on Miller's experiences with the 1961 movie "The Misfits," which he wrote and which starred his second wife, Marilyn Monroe.

Miller's major plays "are remarkable works. This is a long life in the theater — and outside the theater," said Enoch Brater, a

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IN SUNDAY'S FREE PRESS

HEALING THE HURT

Bloomfield Hills doctor pushes effort to ease suffering in his quake-torn Sri Lanka homeland.

BREEZY, MILD
Some sun in afternoon.
Jerry Hodak's forecast, 18A

42
HIGH
21
LOW



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