

# Booze licenses golden to dineries

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"THE GOLDEN CORRIDOR," observes Orchard Lake attorney John Carlin, when talking about Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield. The area is, he said, one of Oakland County's "hot spots of dynamic growth." For 10 years, Carlin has specialized in liquor licensing law.

He recently represented parties involved in the sale of two licenses in West Bloomfield, one sold by Confection to Mr. B's and the other sold by Bloomfield Charities to West Bloomfield Pals. Though Carlin would not reveal the sale price of either license, he suggested both were less than the asking price of Richard and Reiss.

He also said selling price often reflects the established business and includes building and location, furniture and fixtures. Licenses sold without these additional trappings may be purchased for as low as \$40,000 and possibly even \$30,000.

More of a problem, according to Carlin, is such licenses are rare commodities.

Rochester Hills is an exception. In recent years, population growth has outstripped restaurant development

and the city finds itself with new licenses. Quota licenses are issued on the basis of one for every 3,000 residents or "a major fraction thereof." The cost is \$600 each.

Consequently, when restaurant chains like the Olive Garden and Max and Erma's sought entry into the hot Rochester market, inexpensive liquor licenses were available, permitting the city to capitalize on some \$3 million in development and hundreds of new jobs, according to a city employee.

**CONSCIOUS OF ECONOMICS.** Troy officials conducted and certified a population census in 1974 to, among other things, realize new licenses. While the effort was successful, it did not generate income enough to warrant a similar count midway between the national census of 1980 and 1990, according to Troy clerk Ken Courtney.

The city has licenses available now but "the council is not too fast in doling them out. They have a policy of not giving them out as soon as they get them," Courtney said.

West Bloomfield, too, has ample licenses for now. "I've been here three-and-a-half years and we ha-

ven't had to say nothing's available yet," said township treasurer Denise Hammond.

In Southfield, where population growth is stable, there are no new licenses. When one comes available for sale from an existing owner, new buyers are considered on the merit of proposed development, according to Southfield clerk Mary Bonner. In addition, city ordinance prohibits more than 90 days inactivity of a license.

To curtail the practice of "parking" unused licenses in escrow accounts for later sale, Southfield attorney John Berra took legal action against John Berra Tavern and Flor D'Alia last year. Both licenses were returned to the city, one by the court and the other by the state liquor commission, Berra said.

In the event a community wants to capitalize on proposed economic development and a license is unavailable, either by choice or because none is available for use, developers may apply to the state liquor commission for a resort license.

**ADJACENT TO CHILI'S** on Northwestern, another large restaurant is also under construction, the

Macaroni Grill. Combined, the two projects total over \$3 million, according to Carlin who orchestrated the transaction. Both developments were granted million-dollar liquor licenses, approved by the Farmington Hills city council. Such licenses are subject to local approval.

In September, Birmingham city commissioners denied a request for resort licensing by Mike Hitch of Little Caesars and Jimmy Schmidt of the Rattlesnake Club in Detroit. The pair hoped to start a high-loose, Mediterranean-styled restaurant in downtown Birmingham.

Commissioners rejected the request, according to city clerk Judy Bann, because "we were granted 17 licenses in 1972, when a slim majority of the voters approved liquor by the glass. The population has dropped significantly since. Commissioners don't feel we need more. It's their feeling the residents don't want more. If you approve one resort license, you open the door to more."

Each year, the state commission grants 25 million-dollar resort licenses. To qualify, development projects require full-service restaurant developments of \$1 million

## Liquor license limits

This chart shows the maximum number of liquor licenses available in each community.

City	Class C	Class C Resort	Club	Class B Hotel	Class B Hotel/Resort
Birmingham	18			1	
Beverly Hills	3				
Bloomfield Hills	1		3	1	
Bloomfield Twp.	12		5		1
Farmington	7		2		
Farmington Hills	37	1	5	2	2
Rochester	5	2	2		
Rochester Hills	26			2	
Southfield	37	1	5	2	2
Troy	34	4	5	5	5
West Bloomfield	24	24	4		

Source: City governments

each, with capacity for 100 or more patrons. These licenses may be sold to new owners but may not be transferred to new locations.

In addition, the state commission

issues another 10 resort licenses each year. These licenses may be sold and transferred to any location statewide, providing the establishment is a resort.

## School board maps building plan for future

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meadow Common Campus media center, electrical upgrades in other buildings, and increasing the depth of one high school pool to allow competitive pool sports.

Parent David York pleaded the case for Highmeadow saying the media center has "a direct impact on learning." Trustees said other projects could be put onto the master plan for consideration in future years.

Also mentioned were concerns about overcrowding at Larshville Elementary and trustees agreed that a decision to renovate the Farmington Training Center should not be made until the district decides how to use the building.

Trustee James Abernethy said a big priority for the district is equalizing opportunities at all school buildings. "There is, at least, some serious differences... at some buildings," he said.

Board vice president Jack Inch said he was concerned that needs in all areas of the district be addressed.

"The more we spread the projects, the more good will we will get throughout the district," he said. "I think that has to enter into our consideration."

According to information from the district, it has spent \$30 million since 1987 to upgrade its facilities.

## Somerset Santa Claus grew into the job

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This year they brought him some candy, a few ornaments and some photographs from last Christmas.

Santa, you see, has become a part of their lives.

"It's kind of funny seeing the same Santa every year," said Sean,

Mulhern, 16, a student at Birmingham Brother Rice.

"This year I didn't really want to sit on his lap, but he dragged me up there so my mom could take our picture."

Never too old for St. Nick, mom would say.

The Mulherns and Abelas consid-

er this Santa their own little secret. He's the fellow who brought their children gifts, and put a smile on everyone's face.

"I don't even want to know his real name," said Chris Mulhern. "I think it would spoil the fun."

Santa chuckles when told of the cheer he brings. All a part of the

magic, he says.

"Santa's never had such publicity," said St. Nick. "It keeps up. I'm going to have to come out here again next year... and I'm getting a little old for this kind of fun."

Don't worry. Santa will be there. He always is.

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**\*STAR TREK (PG)**  
12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30

**\*MY GIRL (PG)**  
12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30

**\*THE ADAMSON FAMILY (PG-13)**  
12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30, 2:00, 2:30, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00, 4:30, 5:00, 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, 11:30

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**PLANE, TRAIN, AUTO (PG)**  
12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00

**CAPIE FEAR (PG)**  
12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00

**LAST BOY SCOUT (PG)**  
12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00

**BUGSY (R)**  
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**PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAYS IF YOU HAVE ARTHRITIS**

If you have arthritis, the Christmas season may be a time you dread. Overcrowds, boots, and the threat of icy streets makes outdoor movement tiring and tedious. Standing in line at checkout counters, accepting responsibility for preparing dishes, and the need to congregate in a cheery manner when you are tired and in pain, can put a chilly and to holiday happiness.

However, there are ways to ease distress and minimize disappointment. Delegate as much as possible. Try to plan ahead as to who could buy gifts and baking items you may need. Make the most of catalogs, not only for ordering items, but using their descriptions to instruct others who may be making purchases for you.

Place yourself. Travel when you feel up to it. However, put limits on your activities. Have alternative going out days in mind, if other nature's bad mood or your own aching joints hamper the schedule you had in mind.

Fashion your expectations. Consider what you can reasonably derive from yourself, and what others, with demands upon them, can likely contribute. Don't over commit yourself or your family.

The key is anticipation. If you look ahead realistically and plan with sense, then the hope of a happy holiday is as logical as it is romantic.

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