

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Dear Readers,

As previously announced, on Feb. 2 we will begin publishing a Sunday edition that will replace the Monday edition of the The West Bloomfield-Lakes Eccentric. You can expect to find the same quality news and features you are familiar with the Monday paper.

The West Bloomfield-Lakes Eccentric has continued to win many national and state awards for journalistic quality, and we are committed to providing our readers with high quality service. With our move to Sunday delivery we will be able to provide you with even more of the best community news and information for your reading pleasure.

Sincerely,
Thomas Byrd
Tom Byrd, Publisher

TASTE

Chinese New Year: Make plans to celebrate the year of the ox at local Chinese restaurants. /B1

Main dish miracles: Dietitian Muriel G. Wagner's saucy shrimp dish will win your heart. /B1

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House burns, gasoline spills

BY JANET SUGAMELI
STAFF WRITER

Troy firefighters spent four hours trying to salvage a one-story ranch home on the corner of Dequindre and Northampton Thursday afternoon and spent part of Wednesday helping clean up a gasoline spill at Athens High School.

The house fire, which occurred between Maple and Big Beaver, caused an estimated \$140,000 in property loss. There were no victims inside at the time of the incident, and no injuries resulted from the fire.

"As far as I know, it was a family home and no one was home at the time," Fire Lt. Chuck Riesterer said Friday.

There is extensive damage to the structure and the contents. "It wasn't like it burned and the roof caved in, but it is unlivable and I think it would be a fair assessment to say the inside of the home is gutted," Riesterer said.

The cause of the fire is unknown, but he said samples of the remains will be tested. It will be a few weeks before the results return, he added.

In another incident, the Troy Fire Department and two private environmental contractors removed more than 3,700 gallons of gasoline spilled in a parking lot at Athens High School Wednesday morning.

"It was on the driveway, education parking lot, and that area, because of all the cars we have there, has a gas tank," said schools spokeswoman Hedy Blatt.

The area is a "distance" away from the school, Blatt said, and is usually used in the summer for drivers' education and in the fall and spring for marching band practice.

"Somewhere the nozzle came off the hose and the gas leaked," she said. "The leak was actually curtailed because of the snow banks."

She added that the incident was accidental and could have been caused by a strong wind. Blatt said vandalism was not the cause.

There was no threat to the students and staff. Firefighters arrived around 8:20 a.m. Wednesday after a maintenance employee noticed the spill when reporting for work.

"He immediately turned off the gas pump and notified the fire department," a release from the fire department said. "The school took action to protect the students by restricting their access to the site. At no time were students in danger."

Riesterer said an embankment was dug to prevent any further spilling from entering storm sewers.

■ 'The inside of the home is gutted.'

Chuck Riesterer
—Fire department

Ice hockey team wins approval

■ The 24 high school players who'll make the Troy School District's new boys' varsity hockey team will have to pay about \$600 each to participate. But their parents don't seem to mind.

BY JANET SUGAMELI
STAFF WRITER

It's official.

Troy Schools will have a combined high school hockey team for boys and four freshman soccer teams for the 1997-98 school year.

The Troy Board of Education last week approved the cost of \$29,191 for the hockey team and \$25,200 for four freshman soccer teams, including the boys and girls teams at both high schools.

Each of the 24 players who make the hockey team will be required to pay for practice ice time, which could be in the area of \$600 per player. The district will absorb the costs for hockey equipment, coaches, game ice time, transportation, game management and officials.

"I'm really excited they finally

considered this and are giving many players a chance to play for their school," said Danny Maddon, a sophomore at Athens High School.

Last year more than 600 students seeking a school hockey team signed a petition at Troy High School, which was presented to the board.

Mark Jackson, whose son Ryan has been playing hockey at the Lindell Ice Arena in Royal Oak, said, "I think it's a character-building sport... and the students love it. It gives an opportunity for some students to get into a varsity sport."

And he doesn't mind paying for the practice ice time. "There's no

problem paying," said Jackson. "We're used to it and most other parents have no problem with it either."

The team will play at the private Troy Sports Center, which is under construction at the northwest corner of Big Beaver and John R.

Dan Roa, president of the Troy Hockey Association and a partner in the Troy Sports Center development, said Friday that the Troy Schools hockey team already has an ice time slot reserved.

"We're pretty excited to have the Troy Schools participate in this kind

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State of the City: Troy still rosy, but roads need work

BY SURAN STEINWELLER
STAFF WRITER

Troy Mayor Jeanne Stine painted a bright picture of a stable, growing and prosperous city, expected to do well for years into the future, in her annual state of the city address on Thursday.

"The overall economy is looking rosy for us," she said.

But she also touched upon the challenges of managing the growth and prosperity, such as the need to take care of infrastructure, especially the roads.

"Troy finds itself in the somewhat unique position of having to deal with the inherent challenges of a maturing community," she said.

The address was given at the 35th annual meeting of the Troy Chamber of Commerce, held at the Northfield Hilton. The event also featured the passing of the gavel from outgoing chamber board chairman Craig Lange to 1997 chairman Garry Carley, Standard Federal Bank's executive vice president.

Also introduced were the 1997 board of directors, including vice chairman Gary Tadian of Tadian Homes and secretary/treasurer Carol Roncetti of William Beaumont Hospital, Troy.

The speech was well received.

"It was wonderful as always," said Stine's stepister, Pat Singel, who attended with her husband Gary, both of Singel Plumbing of Troy. "She is so well-rounded in

her understanding of the city and so positive."

"I thought it was good" said Douglas Smith, vice president and chief administrative officer at Walsh College in Troy. "I think everybody in the room was fairly familiar with Somerset North and all the growth, but too often when we live and work in Troy, we forget all the mundane things like infrastructure. It was a good reminder."

In her speech, Stine reflected on how last year, the state of the city address was given by Frank Gorman on the eve of his retirement as city manager, and how he talked about Troy's growth.

"I believe he used as a basis for his talk... that famous phrase, 'If you build them, they will come,' to explain the healthy financial and economic vitality of our city. And certainly, he was right."

But she said that with all the growth, planning for the future is even more important.

She called roads "one of the most obvious concerns."

As an example, she cited that along with the opening of Somerset North last year came an additional 3,200 employees and hundreds of shoppers.

"We now have approximately one million cars traversing our streets each day," she said.

Stine called it fortunate that Troy and the Road Commission for

See SPEECH, A3



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN STORCKLAND



Looking ahead: Above, Mayor Jeanne Stine talks with Garry Carley, the new chairman of the Troy Chamber of Commerce Board just before the annual chamber luncheon. Stine presented a State of the City address. At left, Stine's 90-year-old mother Eleanor Foster was in the audience.

Happy days MEAP scores please Avondale

BY SHARON DARGAY
STAFF WRITER

Avondale school staffers are ready to toss confetti in celebration of fourth and seventh grade Michigan Educational Assessment Program test scores.

Here's why: ■ At fourth grade, 12.6 percent more students scored "satisfactory," the highest achievement level, on the reading test this year.

■ Auburn and Graham elementary school fourth graders took giant steps in reading proficiency. About 20 percent more Auburn students scored satisfactory on reading tests this year. At Auburn, slightly more than 26 percent more fourth graders moved into the top achievement category.

■ About 9.5 percent seventh graders answered more reading questions correctly, earning satisfactory scores.

■ Deerfield Elementary may become the district's first accredited elementary school because it has maintained high MEAP test scores for two years.

"We're getting there," said Curriculum Director Jim Coe, assessing

Avondale's steady climb to the top scoring category. The Avondale district includes a northern section of Troy.

The district represents the percentage of students who attained "satisfactory," "moderate," or "low" achievement.

The district made modest gains

■ 'One thing we did was to look at students who were having difficulty and to identify and create strategies.'

Tim McAvoy
—District spokesman

in math, with about 2 percent more fourth graders entering the satisfactory category this year. Satisfactory math scores dropped by about 1 percent.

Tim McAvoy, the district's community relations director, doesn't know why Stiles Elementary School's math and reading scores dropped while scores increased at other schools.

On math tests, 16.5 fewer Stiles fourth graders earned satisfactory scores this year. The reading scores went down about 7 percent.

He said the district will know more about the decrease after it analyzes test scores.

But he has some idea why most scores improved.

"One thing we did was to look at students who were having difficulty and to identify and create (reading) strategies," he said.

With help from Ernest Bauer, an Oakland Intermediate Schools consultant, Coe and the Avondale staff analyzed test results last year and developed teaching strategies to strengthen weak student skills.

Linda Maniago, a second grade teacher at Auburn, said the staff last year paid close attention to test questions that had stumped Avondale youngsters.

In analyzing results, for example, she discovered that students didn't understand the kind of vocabulary — phrases like "more common" or "less likely" — that appears frequently in reading tests.

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Kids save pennies for peace garden

BY JANET SUGAMELI
STAFF WRITER

Students in Troy elementary school classes are doing their part to sponsor peace.

The children will write what peace means to them and during the same week they will collect "Pennies for Peace." The money will go toward the city's planned Peace Garden, slated to be developed behind city hall.

"Most of the schools in Troy are working on developing writing skills so we thought they could integrate writing about peace," said Shirley Schmidt, a special education teacher at Troy Union who is organizing the student participation. "Diana Waecheer (co-chair of the Peace Garden) said we could have one student from every elementary school read their selection at the opening ceremony for the Peace Garden."

"In February some of the schools are going to cooperate with pennies for peace," said Margaret Gaffney,

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