

Area resident in need of help – pages 12A & 13A

The Clarkston News

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2 Sections 64 pages 50¢

In perspective

A Clarkston Schools salaries comparison

BY ANDREW DUPONT
Clarkston News Staff Writer

A fair perspective on salary ranges cannot be gained without comparing the district's numbers to others.

Last week, *The Clarkston News* listed the pay scales and salaries for various positions within the Clarkston School District. Comparatively speaking, Clarkston principals and Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts are paid higher than the state average and districts of similar size. However, their salaries are within range with other districts in Oakland County. The following is a breakdown of figures comparing Clarkston salaries to other school districts.

On the State level:

The average salary for elementary school principals in Michigan ranges from \$76,803 to \$80,081. In Clarkston, elementary school principals' scale goes from \$86,422 to \$96,849.

The average salary for middle school

principals in Michigan ranges from \$75,601 to \$84,353. Sashabaw Middle School Principal Linda Foran's salary is currently \$98,198.

The average salary for high school principals in Michigan ranges from \$77,713 to \$87,485. Clarkston High School Principal Janice Meagher's salary is currently \$111,291.

The average salary for district superintendents is \$104,288. Clarkston Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts' current salary is \$142,000.

Other local districts:

Overall, Oakland County averaged higher than the state averages. Salaries for officials in the district fell within the range of other local school districts.

The Oakland County average for elementary schools principals ranges from \$88,705 to \$102,528 with specific examples being:

- Brandon \$90,481 to \$93,881

Please see *Salaries*, page 28A

It's not 'taxation without representation'

BY JENNY MATTESON
Clarkston News Editor

This week *The Clarkston News* is continuing with part two of our survey results.

We asked readers their opinions on various aspects of the Clarkston School District and the upcoming millage ballot.

Last week, *The News* reviewed general opinions on the schools, reported whether responders felt administrators and teachers were paid fairly and viewpoints on the district's 10-year, 19.2491 non-homestead millage.

This week, *The News* focuses on the non-homestead aspect of the survey – whether or not responders own non-homestead property and their views on non-homestead millages.

Got land?

The majority of responders, 38 of 52, said they do not own non-homestead property. Non-homestead property is defined as commercial and industrial properties, rental properties, second homes and vacation homes.

Of the remaining 14 responders, 13 own non-homestead property and one did not respond to the question. Some of the property types listed include vacation property, vacant land, second homes and one individual said "all of the above."

One individual who does not own non-homestead property wrote, "but the price of MY purchases pay their taxes."

Taxation without representation

When asked if the non-homestead millage is "taxation without representation," 27 responders said "no," 19 said "yes" and four did not respond. Two responders said the tax is both representative and non-representative.

"Yes and no because although vastly outnumbered, non-homestead owners residing in the district are at least able to vote. Non-resident owners of non-homestead have no say in the taxes they have to pay. The presumption by many voters is that businesses are able to absorb higher tax costs at a time when many small and large companies are having fi-

Please see *Survey*, page 16A

One happy bunny...



Three-year-old Alyssa Exline rides piggy-back on her grandpa Harold following an Easter egg hunt at Millpond Park in Davisburg. For more pictures from the event, hop over to pages 32A, 8B and 9B. Photo by DuPont

Millstream

Take a flight in a B-17 with Jon Stevens.

Page 1B



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Sports

Meet this week's Athlete of the Week - Faith Lieder

Page 23A



Creating Easter smiles...

Clarkston Farm and Garden Club members visit residents at Pinetree Place and Sunrise Assisted Living frequently to direct craft sessions and reminisce with long-time friends. Here members (left to right) Ada Land, Marilyn Loukes, Kay Robertson and Jeanne Molzon sport their long floppy ears as they stand around friend Janet Rose. According to club publicity chair Mary Jane Scharfenkamp, Rose was a charter member of the Farm and Garden Club from 1948. Rose also volunteered with a small group to gather books to establish the first Independence Township Library and taught for many years at Clarkston Elementary. Photo provided

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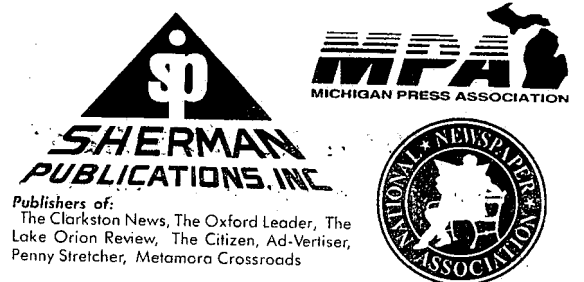
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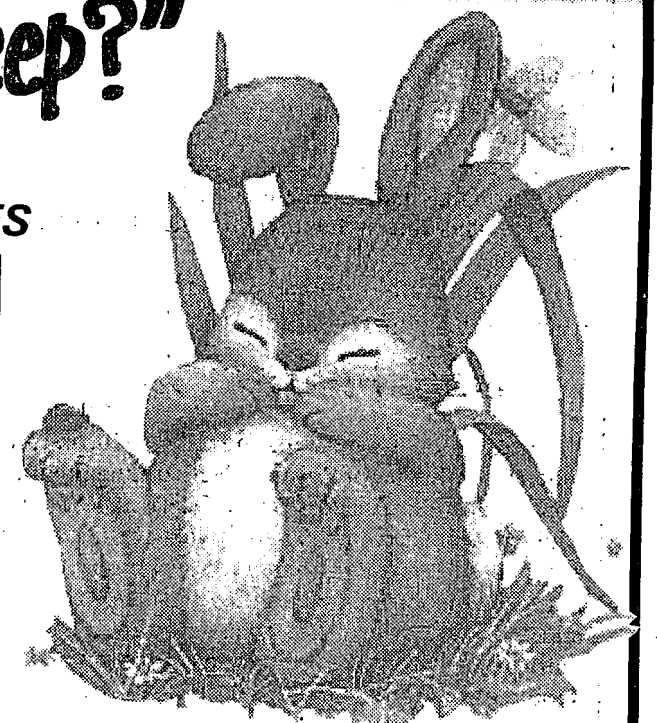
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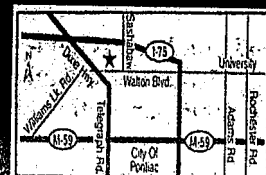
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The Second Front

Briefly

Band to perform

The Clarkston Community Band, under the direction of Vince Chrisman, presents "Broadway's Hits" on April 25 at 7 p.m. at Sashabaw Middle School. The event features special guest performances by the Stardusters Jazz Band and Benthic Brass Tuba Ensemble.

Hear award winning show tunes from "Wicked," "Rent," "West Side Story" and many more. Sit back and relax as Stardusters perform jazz versions of "On Broadway" and "Chicago." The Benthic Brass will relive the patriotic days of George H. Cohan with his favorite melodies.

The concert is free and all are invited. For more information, contact Independence Township Parks and Recreation at 248-625-8223 or e-mail clarkstonband@hotmail.com. You can also go online to www.clarkstonband.org.

Women in Business

Surprises abound at the April 27 Women in Business event, held at the Palace of Auburn Hills in the Palace Club from 10:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Due to the unknown playoff schedule for the Pistons, a variety of alternative plans are prepared for this unique Women in Business event.

- A behind the scenes tour of the new Palace facilities and a visit by team members from the Shock (security and practices will impact access for this tour).

- Guest speakers from the Palace Sports & Entertainment Marketing department will share networking tips and provide behind the scenes perspectives of a successful organization.

The cost is \$25 per person. The cost is only \$20 per person for chamber members with prepaid reservations. This rate is honored for members of any chamber.

For more information, call the Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce at 248-625-8055.

BNI Visitors Day

Interested in networking? The Clarkston/Waterford Chapter of Business Networking International is hosting a Visitors Day at Deer Lake Athletic Club on April 25 from 7-9 a.m. BNI is a business and professional networking organization whose primary purpose is to exchange qualified business referrals and currently has over 4,100 chapters throughout the world. Seating may be limited, so anyone interested should contact Ruth Gruber at 248-625-1365.

Penny Stretcher turns 25

The Penny Stretcher is turning 25 – and we're ready to celebrate!

The Penny Stretcher was started by Jim Sherman, Sr. during the first week of May in 1981. Since that time, the publication has been going strong, and getting better.

To honor the event, The Clarkston News is holding a 25th Anniversary Sale – 25 percent off all display advertising in the May 3, 2006 publication.

Contracts apply and no other discounts are allowed at the same time (30 percent off repeat rate).

Help us celebrate 25 years of great advertising – call The Clarkston News and Penny Stretcher at 248-625-3370.



Ray Delasko stands in front of the entrance to Independence Oaks, where he worked and lived for over 35 years. Photo by Dave Pemberton.

Longtime park supervisor retires

BY DAVE PEMBERTON

Clarkston News Sports Writer

Independence Oaks County Park said good-bye to a founding father on April 14 – Ray Delasko retired after 37 years of stewardship.

Delasko helped design Independence Oaks, ran the park for over 35 year and made the grounds his home.

Independence Oaks has been good to Delasko, who was good to it. Delasko didn't expect to be at the park so long when he took the job.

"I thought it was going to be a stepping stone," Delasko said. "What happened was they provided me with a house, which is a unique job situation because you can live where you actually work. I can walk to work. I don't have to commute back and forth.

The park provided Delasko with a home on the park grounds, as well as a cell phone and a truck.

"As the years progressed it became more personal," Delasko said. "I didn't look at it as a job, but more as part of my life. The park is part of my life. I

raised my three boys here."

Delasko's three boys are all grown up now, with the youngest one in college. Ryan, Paul and Shawn are going to miss the house, but not as much as his wife, Joyce. She has enjoyed never having neighbors.

Retiring will give Delasko and his wife more time to spend with their three boys and their granddaughter Grace. Delasko said he also wants to start traveling and enjoying the holidays. He rarely got a holiday off while running the park.

Delasko never considered that when he decided to get into the field of parks and recreation.

He attended business school at University of Michigan-Flint, but found it boring. He saw the parks and recreation program in a Michigan State catalog so he set up a meeting with the program director.

The director told him the program was just starting, but he knew there was a need for more people in the field.

He graduated from Michigan State in 1971 and took

Please see Delasko, page 28A



Ray Delasko and his family. From left to right; son Ryan, daughter-in-law Catherine and granddaughter Grace, son Paul, wife Joyce, Delasko, daughter-in-law Emily and son Shawn. Photo provided



Heidi Wood was recently elected to the Clarkston Area Chamber Board of Directors. Photo provided

New Clarkston Chamber director

T&C Federal Credit Union's Clarkston Branch Manager, Heidi Wood, was recently elected to the Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Wood has served as a chamber volunteer for over eight years in a variety of rolls and currently chairs the Scholarship Committee. She was recognized twice for outstanding volunteer service

to the chamber and also sits on the Taste of Clarkston Committee.

"I think that the Clarkston Area Chamber is a wonderful asset to the community," said Wood. "They are constantly looking for ways to add more value to sponsorships and to get more people involved. I truly care about what happens in Clarkston because it's a great place to live and work."

'Spring Clean Up Day' for Springfield Twp.

BY JAMES MARTINEZ
Clarkston News Staff Writer

With warmer temperatures arriving, the time has arrived for Springfield Township residents to clean out the closets and pitch those run down appliances.

The Spring Clean Up Day for Springfield Township residents is on May 13, from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Springfield Oaks Youth Activity Center on 12451 Andersonville Road in Davisburg.

Residents must have proof of residency or property ownership available to participate. Participants are encouraged to bag, box or bundle all trash.

Prohibited items include: brush, farm tractor tires, leaves or grass clippings, stumps, oil, propane tanks, paint,

flammable liquids, concrete or bricks. There is also no commercial dumping allowed.

The fee schedule for the clean up is as follows:

- cars \$1
- SUV/minivans \$5
- pickup trucks \$10
- large trucks \$15
- trailers \$10 or \$15 depending on size.

• There is no charge for tires, but they must not be on rims.

• A \$10 charge is in place for batteries (each) and for freon appliances.

A hazardous waste collection is on May 20 at Independence Township D.P.W. on Flemings Lake Road. Call the Springfield Township office for details and a voucher at 248-846-6520.

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Armstrong vs. Erickson

Where do they stand? How are they different? Did anyone attend?

BY ANDREW DUPONT
Clarkston News Staff Writer

Even the candidates for the open seat on the Clarkston School Board admit the race has been quiet.

With no major campaigning, disagreements or hot issues for debate between Joseph Armstrong and Renata Erickson, there was little to discuss at the public "Candidates Night" on April 11 - a likely reason why not a single member of the general public attended the event.

Even prior to the debate, little attention has been given to the candidates as the May 2 election approaches. Both Armstrong and Erickson agreed not to spend money on lawn signs or campaigning for this election, stating the money could be better spent elsewhere.

The public debate was the only one scheduled before the election and was moderated by Lisa Bauer, president of the Oakland Area League of Women Voters, a national nonpartisan organization. Members of the audience could submit questions for the candidates to answer. The event was scheduled to run for an hour, but ended approximately 20 minutes early due to a lack of questions.

Throughout the question and answer portion of the forum, the focus quickly became the similarities between the two candidates rather than their differences.

In his opening statement, Armstrong acknowledged both Erickson and himself as very qualified candidates and in closing he joked that if people have a hard time choosing between them, they should vote in alphabetical order.

Both acknowledged they applied for the open seat after seeing nobody else had.

"In Clarkston, there is no important issue. If there was an important issue, I think someone would come up and have an agenda," Armstrong said.

When asked if there were

any areas in Clarkston that could use improvements, both agreed that budgetary issues need a closer look.

"One of the problems that every school district has is finances and I see that is a big problem. How we solve that is going to be very interesting. I think there's going to be some tough decisions," Armstrong said.

"I would have to agree with my opponent in that budget items are the biggest hurdle right now for the Clarkston School Board," Erickson said. "Like Joe said, there are going to be some very tough decisions to be made and there are going to have to be some cuts made... and it's going to be a tough choice."

Though Armstrong and Erickson both listed budget cuts as the biggest concern for the district, neither had any specific suggestions for where cuts could be made.

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When asked what could be done to improve the quality of the school board, Armstrong and Erickson emphasized their satisfaction with the current board.

"I think what they're doing now is good," Armstrong said, adding that small actions to emphasize employee appreciation could improve morale.

"I think the Clarkston schools are award winning schools," Erickson said. "I think there's always room for improvement like Joe mentioned... little things can always make such an impact."

The district's non-homestead millage request was one of the topics selected for the forum, but Erickson did not want to comment at the time.

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Armstrong did comment, but had mixed feelings about the millage proposal.

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Despite similar re-

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"I am opposed to the ones they have now. I think they are trying to put everything into the same category," Armstrong said. "I am for improved and upgrading preparation for the future, but I think there's a better way to do it."

"I would agree with the graduation requirements. I think it's really important to have a baseline of knowledge," Erickson said, adding that required classes cause kids to "stretch" their potential.

Bauer asked the candidates to name two additional issues facing the district they felt were important. Erickson said she was not aware of any other pressing issues at the time and Armstrong said he was concerned about more redistricting in the future and adjusting staff to support new graduation requirements.

Both candidates were asked if they had any specific goals if elected and neither said they did.

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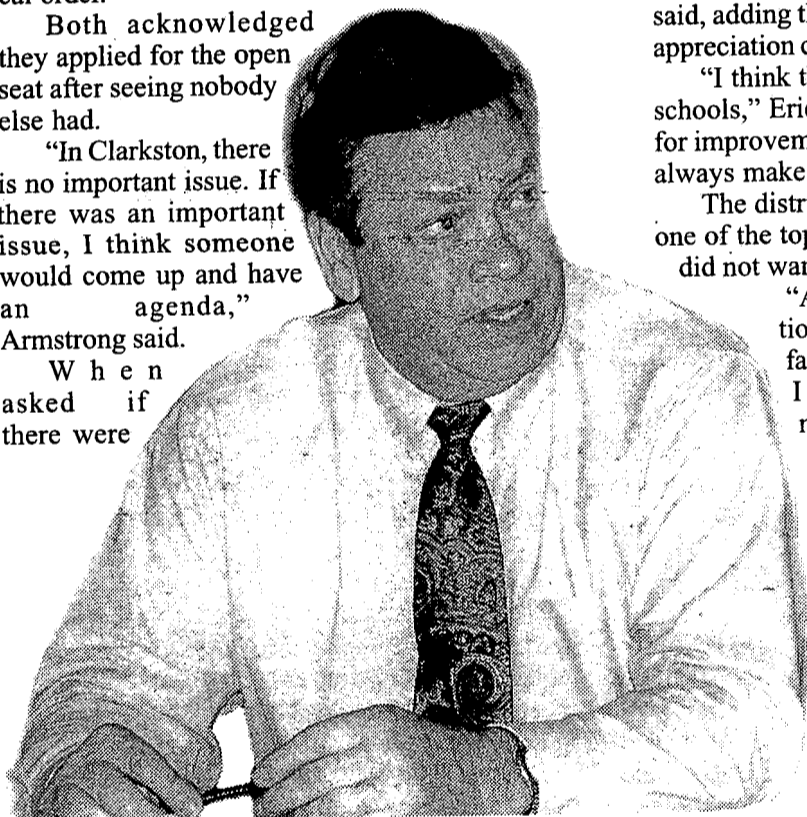
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Joseph Armstrong



Renata Erickson

Pet of the Week



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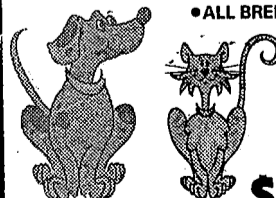
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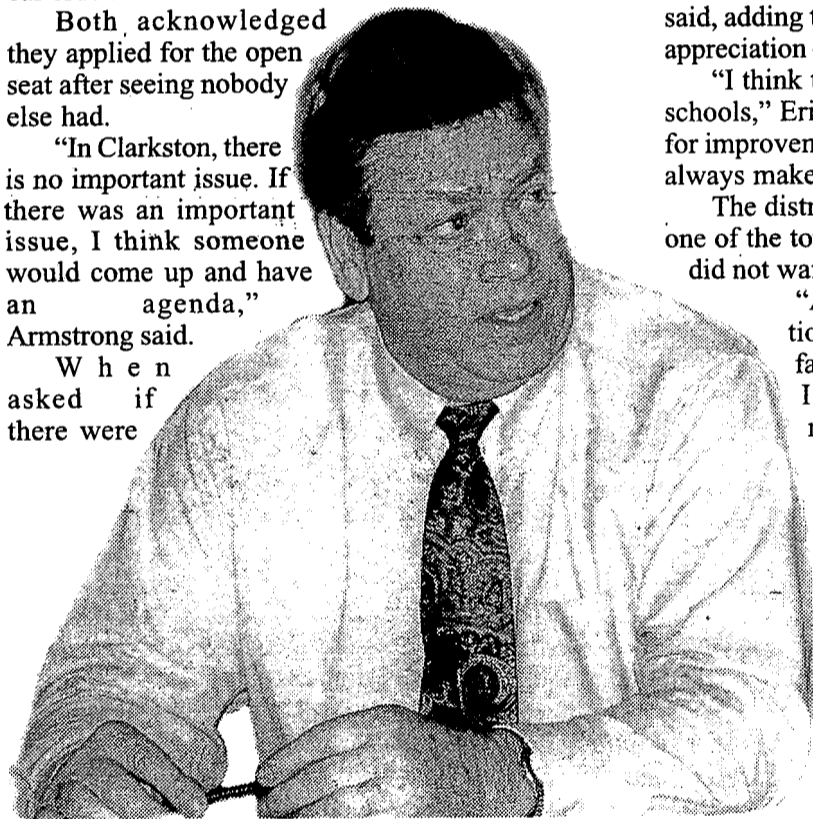
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Intentional Retake

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Jenny's 'war?'

I'm on a rampage, or as some have called it the war path.

See, a few things have happened since last I set words to this space. They have crawled under my skin. Not too many things do that; so when I'm this irked, I feel the need to vent and share my frustrations.

Allow me to begin with this - I've been told I have started a "war" against Clarkston Schools.

Wake me when the 'war' is over

I'm not at "war" against any school district, and I do not "have anything against" Clarkston Schools. My job is not to tow the company or school district line. Our readers should be provided every scrap of information possible when making decisions during election times. It is called journalism.

With that in mind, I find informing our readers of poor decisions an important part of our job.

For example . . .

How can a district rationalize holding discussions on cutting teachers to make up a \$2 million deficit when they are sitting on \$16.6 million in non allocated surplus funds? Is this threat really necessary to pass their 10-year, 19,249 millage?

Apparently, they DO know how to save for a rainy day since they managed to grow their surplus from \$13 million over the last four years while everyone else struggled to make ends meet. Doesn't the school board see the rainy day has arrived and everyone is getting wet? Spend the money, don't pink slip teachers and never use scare tactics on the public. I hate bullies.

What is needed, what is not?

Has the school district not heard of cutting those line items which affect students least? In my viewpoint, that would mean first cutting departments which do not have student contact, such as the Communications and Marketing Department. One person alone makes \$65,742 - and that number doesn't include benefits. In these tough economic times do we need a PR department?

Stand up for what is right

I'm tired of cowards, i.e. those who will not take a stand, voice their opinion or sign their names to a letter to the editor. With the upcoming vote on the district's millage proposal, we at *The News* thought getting the opinion of the community would be a good idea. The school district had a survey, so we did, too.

Another way to get opinions was to contact local business owners. We wanted their opinion on the millage since they will be the ones footing the bill.

I personally made 10 contacts. Guess what, not a single business owner I spoke with would participate. In fact, most wouldn't even give a reason why. It's funny, I actually expected most to participate in support and praise of the millage.

Hurry up and close ranks

I get annoyed by those who believe there's a problem, but won't do anything about the "war." If there is a war, why is there no attempt at an armistice?

Just over two weeks ago, the idea of a meeting between Clarkston Schools leadership and those in charge at *The Clarkston News* (Publisher Jim Sherman, Assistant Publisher Don Rush and darling me) was brought up during a conversation.

Reporter Andrew DuPont presented the pow-wow idea and Jim Sherman jumped at the chance. In fact, he said if possible he would like to meet some of the school board members he does not know. *The Clarkston News* put out the call and offered to host the meeting.

To date, the schools have not responded to our offer. Hello - is anybody out there listening?

So there you are. I'm on a rampage and many will believe I've fired the first shots of my "war."

Personally, I think I'm just mad.

To holler, yell or scream at *The Clarkston News* editor, please e-mail her at shermanpub@aol.com, attn: Jenny, or give her a call at 248-625-3370.

The News to Me



Jenny Matteson

Opinion

Not every resident can 'bite the bullet' for a new senior center

Dear Editor,

After reading Mr. Rizzo's letter, he obviously has problems with Mr. Bullen's thoughts on supporting other more needing projects than the Independence Senior Center.

Mr. Rizzo says it is not always easy to navigate from place to place not to mention the costs from Social Security income and that everyone should "bite the bullet" and make the new senior center happen.

Mr. Rizzo, in your difficult and costly travel to the senior center, please observe the many houses with for sale signs. Look in the Oakland Press Classified Section and notice three to five solid pages of house foreclosures. These houses are our neighbors who have lost their jobs, lost their houses, lost their cars, lost their health insurance coverage and lost their ability to provide the basic necessities of life for their families. They are only the tip of the layoff iceberg as there are predictions that thousands upon thousands more will be added to the unemployment ranks.

Mr. Rizzo and other seniors with substantial retirement incomes, how can you be so callous and have the

audacity to tell these destitute neighbors to "bite the bullet" so you can have a big new playhouse with many toys and whistles. Shame, shame.

Stop acting like a spoiled three-year-old child having a temper tantrum and have a little consideration and compassion for our less fortunate neighbors who no longer have a house as you do. The last thing they need is for you to be driving more nails in their coffins.

Twice the voters have said "no" to the senior center project. Your playhouse may be small and inadequate, but at least you have a playhouse. With our present economy, it is neither life threatening nor imperative that you have a new playhouse.

Our state government administrators predict a two year turn around for our suppressed economy. When and if this does happen and our neighbors are again self supporting, I would be one of the first in line to support the much needed and deserved new Independence Senior Center project. Then you will be able to run, jump up and down, and toot your whistles.

Mr. Rizzo, I am also a senior. You bite your own bullet.

Lloyd Crutchfield, Age 80
Independence Township

Letters to the Editor

Looking forward to the move

Dear Editor,

After eight years of active involvement in the planning of the new senior center and monitoring the progress of hospital development in Independence Township, we have decided to relocate to Rochester Hills.

The reasons are simple. The senior center there (also known as the OPC) is a magnificent gathering spot for retirees. A place where you can enjoy lunch in friendly surroundings for less than \$3. A center of activity where you can swim in two pools, take a course

Please see Letters, page 30A

Allow me to say, 'Hello Clarkston'

Anybody who has ever started a new job can relate to the feeling of excitement and nervousness I had during my first week as a sports writer for *The Clarkston News*. But unlike most jobs, mine is a little more public.

The first work I did for *The Clarkston News* is in this issue for all my new bosses to read. When I say all my new bosses, I don't just mean the ones who hired me and run this company. I also mean the entire city of Clarkston.

Anyone in Clarkston can pick up a copy of the paper and evaluate my work. People who read it can say, "Wow, this Dave Pemberton is a great writer;" or they might think, "Why did they hire this guy?"

That is part of life as a journalist and I'm fine with that. I won't lie I'm hoping for the first reaction, but I welcome any feedback.

My e-mail address is pembertoncn@yahoo.com, so feel free to contact me. Whether it's a story idea, telling me how great or horrible I am, or if you just want to talk sports.

I'm always up for talking about sports and I'm really looking forward to covering Clarkston sports. I have covered Clarkston High School in the past and was quite impressed with the fan base, as well as the teams. Everyone told me what a great sports town Clarkston is and I feel lucky to have a chance to wit-

ness it all now.

So far, I have met some great people for the stories I wrote in this issue. Both Ray Delasko and Faith Lieder were interesting and have good stories to tell. If I continue to run into people like these, my job will be quite enjoyable.

In my short journalism career I have had nothing, but positive experiences. I started off at the Oakland Post, the school paper at Oakland University.

I covered almost every sports team at Oakland and even got a chance to cover the NCAA tournament, when the Golden Grizzlies made it last season. I graduated from Oakland in December, with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

While at Oakland I started working part time at the Oakland Press covering high school sports. I'm from Chesterfield, which is in Macomb County, so I had to learn all the high schools in the area.

Once I did I began to really enjoy covering the different high schools in Oakland County, including Clarkston.

Two of my favorite memories I had while covering Clarkston for the Oakland Press were the football team's victory over Utica Eisenhower in the state playoffs and the boys basketball team defeating Macomb Dakota to win its fourth straight regional title.

I look forward to creating more great Clarkston memories here at *The Clarkston News*. As I finish this column, my first week is nearing its end, but my second week is beginning. I can only hope the excitement stays and the nervousness finally goes away.

According to Dave



Dave Pemberton

A Look Back

At our community's
history through
the pages of
The Clarkston News

15 YEARS AGO (1991)

- Mandatory recycling coming soon: Residents should start practicing good recycling habits in Independence Township – it could be mandatory by the fall.

The Independence Township board approved the first reading of an amendment to the solid waste ordinance April 16.

- Bacteria forces water shut-off: Higher-than-normal bacteria levels found in water samples at Clarkston High School prompted officials to shut wells at the building.

The bacteria was discovered late Thursday during a routine water check by the Oakland County Health Department.

- Winning a cool grand: Imagine being 10 years old and winning \$10,000.

That dream became a reality for Independence Township resident Christopher Palmer April 12.

The youngster's name was drawn in a raffle at Marian High School Birmingham. His 15-year-old sister Melissa sold him the winning ticket. She earned \$500 at the raffle for selling the selected ticket.

25 YEARS AGO (1981)

- DNR plans Levy property inspection: Michigan's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to review the Edward C. Levy Co.'s application for an Inland Lakes and Streams' permit needed to mine 400 acres in Independence Township near the headwaters of the Clinton River.

- Foster care home hits courts again: There's new movement in Lake Oakland Woods subdivision's legal battle to enforce its deed restrictions and oust an adult foster care home currently in the neighborhood.

- For nine months, residents have fought to limit use of homes there to single family, defined by deed restrictions as those related by blood, marriage or legal adoption.

50 YEARS AGO (1956)

- Changes Made On Rural Mail Routes: A new mail route is being established at Clarkston which means there will be a new carrier. All box holders should be sure to have their name on their box and all persons getting mail in other than their own box have mail addressed in care of the name on the box.

- The supply of Salk poliomyelitis vaccine in Oakland County is slowly increasing as had been anticipated, according to Dr. John D. Monroe, Medical Director of the Oakland County Health Department. However, patience and cooperation from parents are still necessary.

- Everyone in the Clarkston area is invited to visit the new home of The Clarkston News, their home town paper. Open House will be held at the new location, 5818 M-15 near Dixie Highway, on Friday afternoon, April 20, from 1:00 until 5:00.

Oh lucky day, the Taxman cometh

We all know (because we are all legal Americans) that it is our right -- dare I say our solemn duty -- to moan, groan and grumble about taxes. Since those exciting days of yesteryear when we tore off the tyrannical shackles of an oppressive government (read taxation without representation) we don't like giving up our hard-earned wages.

So, while illegal immigrants get ready to protest their grievances on May 1, us legals should prepare to celebrate Tax Freedom Day (the day our money stays with us, versus working for The Man)-- the 116th day of 2006, Wednesday, April 26. I'll bring the beer, if somebody else fires up the grill and cooks the weiners.

As a red-blooded American, I can honestly say I hate all those namby-pamby socialist apologists who smugly suggest, "Well, you should be happy. They pay more taxes in Europe..."

If we, taxpaying America, give up shoutin' at those smackin' frackin' revenuers; if we turn yeller', we will become Them. "Them" are the sheep who populate the rest of the world -- those who are betrayed by their own ingrained appeasement of their own royal shepherds.

I read an article on-line by Debora Vrana about taxes worldwide. It had a nice chart that showed taxes from 30 countries involved with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It's a think-tank group based in Paris, France.

Based on 2003 numbers, the U.S. was among the lowest taxed in the world, with only Mexico having a lower tax rate. It's not too hard to see why Mexico has a lower tax rate than the U.S. We're fronting the bill for whatever health care their residents need after they sneak across our border.

The chart showed tax rates (federal, state and local combined) for singles with no kids and married with two kids. In the U.S., the rates were 29.1 percent and 11.9 percent, respectively. The rate in Mexico was a straight 18.2 percent.



don
rush
don't rush
me

Ironically, from the chart it looks like the Irish (who have bad blood for royalty for about 800 years) have the lowest rate in the European Union. If you're single with no kids, you pay 25.7 percent, but if you're married with two kids your rate drops down to 8.1 percent. (Honey, pack the kids, I think it's time to relocate to the old sod.)

The French and German governments are really giving it to their countrymen. If you're a single German with no kids, you fork over nearly 52 percent of your earnings (51.8) to the government. The rate drops down to 35.7 if you get hitched and have a few rug rats. But, the brauts and beer are good, so they have that going for them.

For having the privilege of being born and living in France, you get good wine, the joy of knowing that one in 10 of your countrymen are unemployed and that at any one time 100,000 or so 20-somethings will march in the streets protesting a government they don't understand.

You also get to pay 50.1 percent of your earnings to the French government if you're single with no kids. Getting married and having kids doesn't do you much good, either; you still owe 41.7 percent.

According to the on-line article, Sweden, Turkey, France and Poland impose the biggest tax burdens on families, "but in most of those countries families get added social services, such as secure pensions and health care."

That's the propaganda line they use to get us to feel good about paying more taxes here. The Euros pay more, but they get more back. Hmm... Does anybody really buy that? Do you really think government guaranteed pensions (or anything) are cost-effective, wonderful things?

Or, are the state-sponsored handouts just a way to keep the rabble tame so they don't rise up, with pitchforks in hand?

Just something to think about this election year when you look at your paycheck stub and see how much money you're not bringing home.

Comments for Don Rush can be e-mailed to: dontrushmedon@charter.net

Just jotting...

President Bush has said many times, our country should allow immigrants to come here to do "an honest day's labor."

Since 90 percent of what's being printed and talked about these past several weeks is the treating of illegal immigrants, they must be the persons Mr. Bush is referring to.

Let's see now, President Bush suggests they come here illegally to do an honest day's work.

How do they make that transition?

Seems to me legal and honesty go together, and thus so does illegal and dishonesty. The mere crossing of a border can hardly change a person's mind-set.

Besides, Mr. Bush has to be assuming all border crossers were honest prior to their crossing.

It's just a guess, but I think you might be wrong, Mr. President.

Money talks.
I'll not deny.
I heard it once.
It said good-bye.

What men are deficient of in reason, they usually make up in rage.

Don't dogs hold a grudge? On the few occasion that I haven't taken Shayna in the car with me she will linger on the driver's side of the car as long as she can, looking up into my window, then stare, sadly, at the back of the car until I'm out of sight.

If I interpret her begging looks correctly, she's really miffed that I didn't take her. Her heart is broken, her feeling of rejection deep and her love for me has permanently faded.

Yet, when I return, Shayna hops around in sheer joy. Her eyes sparkle, you'd swear her tail would become disoriented from wagging and her smile is miles wide. Maybe grudges are only a human fault.

I love this saying: Never think of reasoning with a mule, whether it has four legs or only two.

One more politically tainted political comment. Governor Granholm made about as much to-do about raising the minimum wage for Michigan employees as she possibly could.

It will increase the quality of living, it will increase the quality of living, it will increase the quality of living, etc., etc.

I wonder if these increases in wages might also bring more money into state coffers via the way of the six percent sales tax. Could that have held a deeper meaning for the rules of our deficit ridden state?

Always, and I mean always, we should look at all possible reasons when our electeds get behind a any proposal so strongly.

At this writing, both houses of Congress are in their Easter recess for two weeks. For what they've accomplished this year they shouldn't have been there at all. However, just a few weeks prior to this break the U. S. House had spent a total of seven days in session.

The House calendar calls for 96 legislative days in 2006. The 435 members get these Easter two weeks, a week for St. Patrick's Day, a week at Memorial Day, a week around the Fourth of July, all of August and besides, many workweeks call for Mondays or Fridays off.

Not bad for \$165,200 a year and some great benefits. Oh yeah, the adjournment date is October 6.

To get a good night's sleep, relax before bedtime with soft music, a warm bath and light reading. But if you're one who watches the late evening news, and can't get to sleep, you might ask your doctor for a sleeping aid.

Part of this advice is from the "Arthritis Advisor." Part of it is my advice. You can guess which comes from where.

Faded Ink

Tri-party agreement approved for graveling

BY JENNY MATTESON
Clarkston News Editor

Riding home on some secondary roads in Independence Township will soon become a lot smoother thanks to the township board of trustees.

At the April 4 meeting, the board voted unanimously to again enter into a tri-party funding agreement with Oakland County and the Road Commission for Oakland County to have 8.65 miles of secondary roads gravelled.

The total cost to Independence Township for the work is \$55,360.

Those roads listed for graveling include:

- Foster Road, southwest of Dixie to township line
- S. Eston Road, Clintonville to Clarkston
- Perry Lake Road, north of Cranberry Lake Road
- Hadley Road, M-15 to Oak Hill
- Shappie Road, Hadley to Perry Lake roads
- Whipple Lake Road, Pine Knob to North Eston
- Dartmouth Road, Whipple Lake to Oak Hill.

According to Deputy Supervisor

Chuck Herring, the agreement is a yearly item with few changes.

Township trustees also voted unanimously at the meeting to hire Road Maintenance Corporation to chloride all secondary roads in the township. The approved cost is 30 cents per foot not to exceed \$50,000. Four applications are budgeted.

Herring said the other bid came from the RCOC at 26 cents per foot including one additional free application. He said several township trustees spoke in favor of Road Maintenance because of past experiences.

"They have been very pleased with the company and thought the quality was worth the little extra money," said Herring.

The township does reimburse residents on private roads for dust control at half their cost for up to four applications, with statements presented by homeowners at the end of the season. Those residents can also contact Road Maintenance to have the work done.

For more information, or to find out if you are on a private or secondary road, please call Independence Township at 248-625-5111.



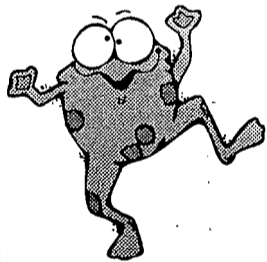
Toastmasters

Lynn Salata of Clarkston brought home first place trophies in both the Division D and District Level Toastmasters International Speech competitions in the Inspirational Speech category. Salata advanced to the Divisional competition and is scheduled to compete on April 22 in Ann Arbor. Toastmasters International is an organization whose focus is on building oral communication and leadership skills. Salata is a local business owner, President of Personal Growth and Development LLC. Pictured, Salata (left) stands with Maria Johnson, a Distinguished Toastmaster and mentor for the Momentum Club. Photo provided.

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Police and Fire

Independence Township

April 5: Between noon and 3 p.m. on April 4, an unknown person scratched the hood of a vehicle parked in the Clarkston High School parking lot.

April 13: 37-year-old Holly man cited for assault and battery after he allegedly struck another man following a car accident around 9:40 a.m. According to reports, a Pontiac man driving a pickup truck with a landscaping trailer struck the Holly man's vehicle on Deerhill Road. When the driver stepped out to talk about the incident, the Holly man allegedly verbally threatened him and then grabbed him by the neck and punched him.

Laptop computer stolen from business on White Lake Road.

Manager of Knights of Columbus on Maybee Road alleges a building contractor accepted \$207,320 in checks for work on the building but only paid \$98,667 to the people he subcontracted the work to, leaving many of them unpaid.

Two golf carts stolen from storage area of Pine Knob Golf Course on Waldon Road. Three other carts found on the property were damaged and driven on the land.

April 14: Home invasion on Golden Hill. A wallet and purse containing credit cards stolen.

Residence on Waterford Hill Terrace toilet papered. A car at the resi-

dence was also toilet papered and the windshield cracked.

April 15: Two area juveniles were witnessed throwing some sort of bottle-type object on the road in the area of Holcomb near the I-75 overpass.

55-year-old Clarkston man living on Mann Road was cited for misuse of 911 after calling the number to talk about how he was mad at his mother for opening up his mail and entering his room. The man was reportedly highly intoxicated and was transported to the White Lake Police Department due to several outstanding misdemeanor warrants.

Employee at a business on Sashabaw reported receiving a threatening phone call from an ex-employee at 7:20 p.m.

Stereo/CD player stolen from a car, by force, at Bridge Water Apartments.

April 16: An arrest warrant was filed for a 33-year-old Grand Blanc man after he allegedly redeemed an altered prescription at a pharmacy on Dixie Highway.

Springfield Township

April 10: 46-year-old Clarkston man arrested for driving with a suspended license and marijuana possession after he was pulled over for crossing the white line on Dixie Highway near Telegraph after 8 p.m.

Loitering 19-year-old Clarkston man and nonresident at apartments on

Bluewater Drive was arrested for marijuana possession with intent to deliver. According to reports, a week prior, the same man was allegedly trying to sell drugs to residents and minors.

April 13: White Lake resident received a call around 6:30 p.m. from an unknown person claiming to be from the "U.S. government." The caller allegedly offered the resident a \$5,000 tax rebate if he provided personal and banking information.

April 14: Two white tail deer discovered hanging and butchered at a E.

Holly Road residence on March 27. The case was forwarded to the DNR. According to www.legislature.mi.gov, the responsible party could face misdemeanor charges with from 5 - 90 days in jail and \$200 - \$1,000 in fines.

April 16: A truck was discovered parked on the side of a road near a driveway on Andersonville. The resident who found the truck, claimed the vehicle was blocking the driveway. The owner was contacted and retrieved the undamaged vehicle which was unoccupied with nothing reported stolen or missing.

Man sentenced for October shooting case in circuit court

A Clarkston man faces two years in jail after pleading no contest to four charges stemming from an October incident where he shot a friend in the abdomen. A fifth charge was rescinded.

Dominic Demetrius French, 25, was sentenced to two years in jail with credit for 175 days served in Sixth Circuit Court in Pontiac on April 12 before Judge Nancy Grant, according to court officials.

French faced charges of felonious assault, reckless discharge of a firearm, felon in position of a firearm and two counts of firearm possession during the commission of a felony, as

reported in *The Clarkston News* Oct. 26 edition.

French was arraigned on Oct. 19 following the incident where he and a friend returned home after celebrating French's passing of a test to enter the military. According to police reports, French drove his wife's vehicle home striking another car along the way.

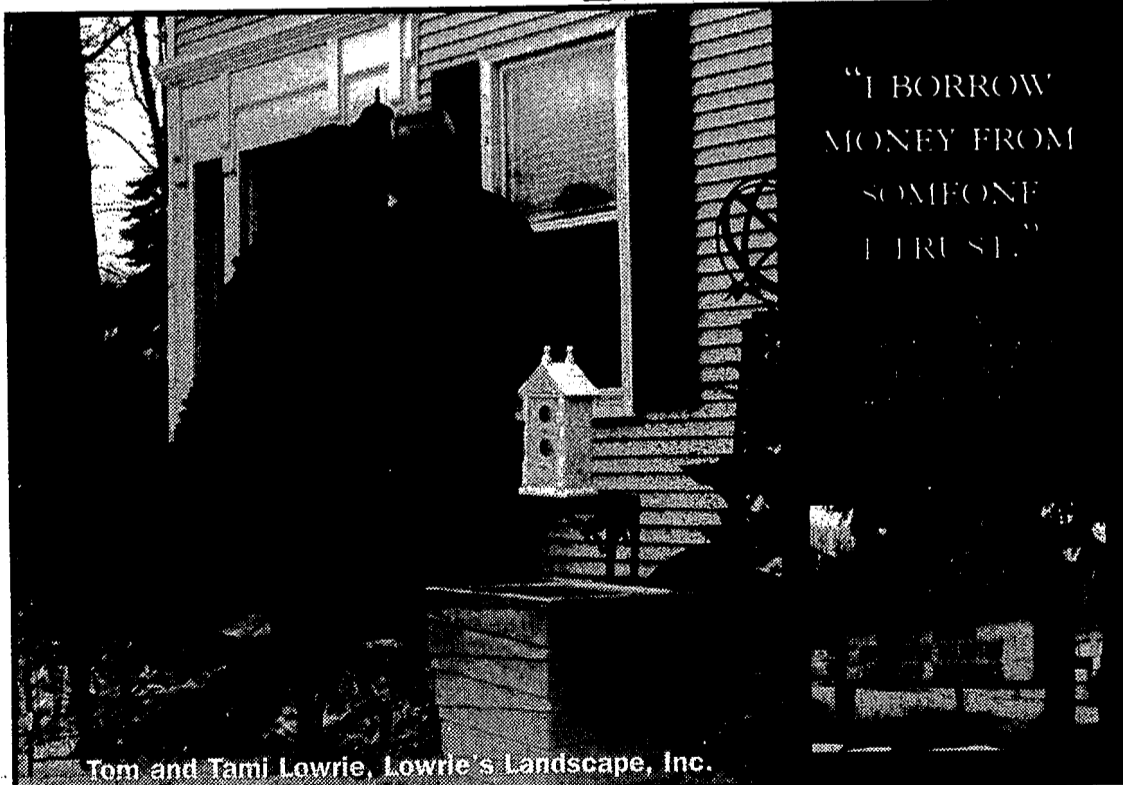
Upon returning home, French grabbed a .22 caliber rifle resulting in the shooting of his friend.

The victim was transported to Genesys Hospital in Grand Blanc and underwent surgery and was later released.

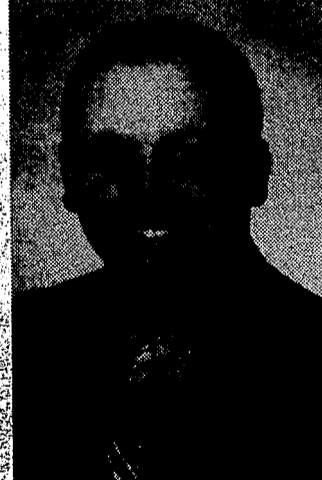


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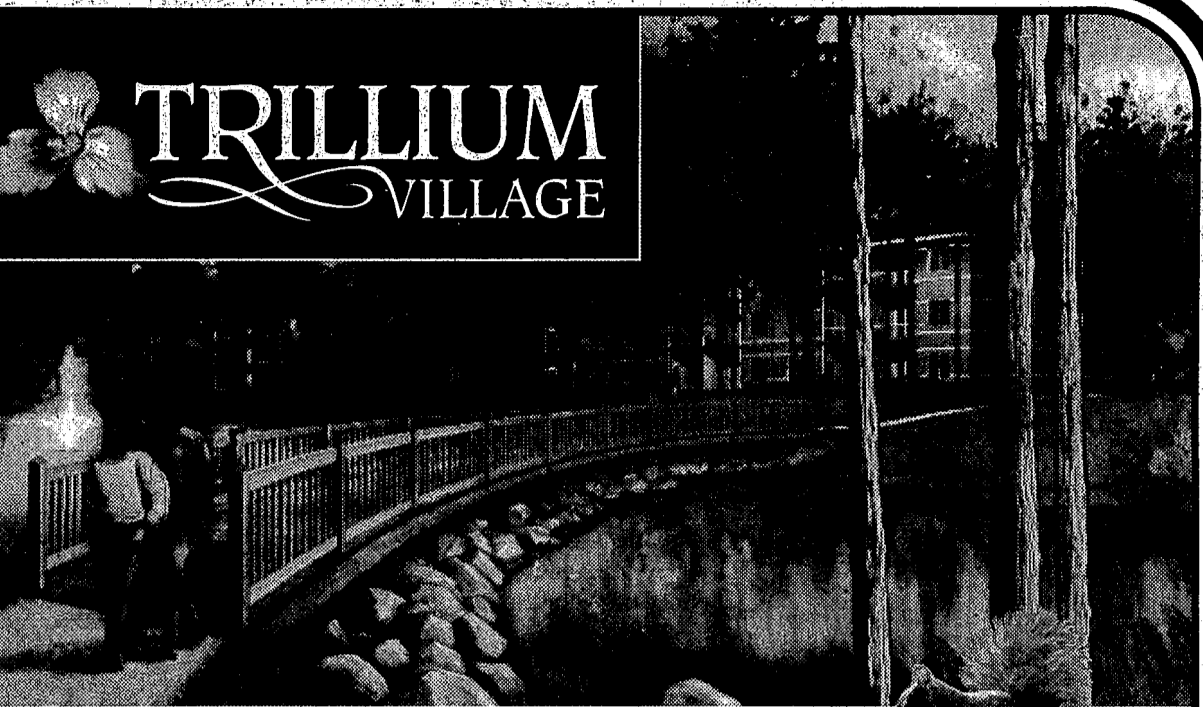
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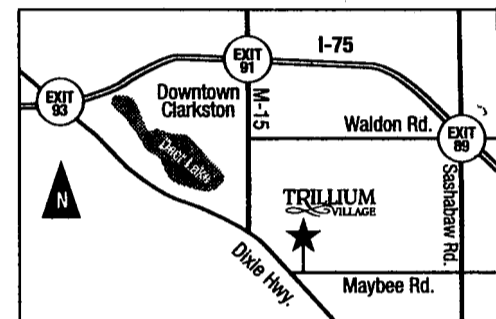
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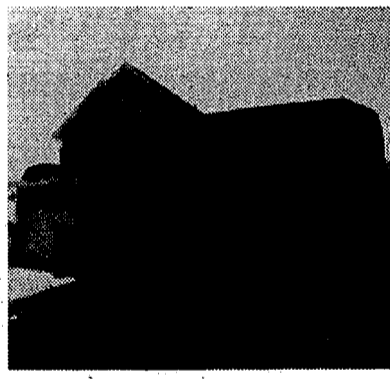
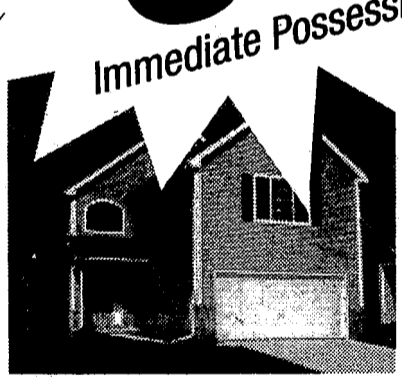
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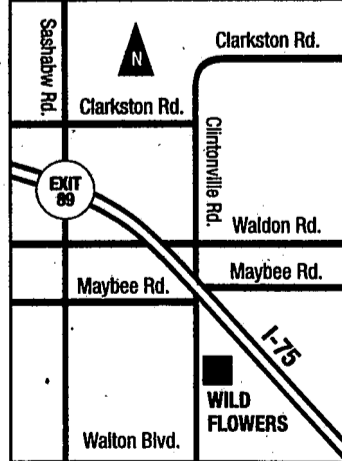
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Library hosts authors

BY JAMES MARTINEZ
Clarkston News Staff Writer

People visiting the Springfield Township Library on May 3 from 6 - 8 p.m. can meet three authors visiting Clarkston thanks to Spring into Reading.

Authors Jim Aylesworth, Deborah Morris and Neal Shusterman complete the cast of writers visiting for the third annual Author's Night. The event was held last year at Independence Township Library and rotates between the two libraries each year.

"It helps (the kids) think about their writing and where it might go... I think they get a lot from meeting them in person and putting a face with a book. It's inspiring to them," said Children's Librarian Francie Bauer. "I think it makes them more real. You pick up a book and don't think about how it came to be."

Spring into Reading Committee Co-chairs Sharon Crain and Sandy Gallivan, who are also elementary media specialists in Clarkston Schools, expressed excitement through an e-mail interview about this year's authors advising kids "to bring an open mind" while learning about the writing and publishing process.

Both Crain and Gallivan said the goal of the non-profit Spring Into Reading, made up of teachers, parents, media specialists and community members, is to bring quality authors and illustrators to the Clarkston community. All K-9 public schools and area public libraries are able to participate in the program, they said.

According to a Spring Into Reading flier, Jim Aylesworth (grades K-2) is a retired first grade teacher and full-time writer who published over 25 picture books. He shares stories with children during visits to schools and uses the elements of sound, rhythm and rhyme.

Author Deborah Morris (grades 3-5) has written 140 magazine articles and 15 adventure books, including a series called "Real Kids, Real Adventures" which was adapted as an Emmy-nominated TV show for the Discovery Channel. She also started working on a new series for teens call "Teens 911," states the flier.

Township board discusses millage for August ballot

BY JAMES MARTINEZ
Clarkston News Staff Writer

Voters in Springfield Township will be asked to renew police and fire millages, and consider an additional half mil for library services, in August.

The township board held a brief discussion at their April 13 meeting asking township attorney Greg Need to draft a millage proposal for the renewal and approval.

"The library board decided they wanted that half a mil. We simply asked the attorney to draft the language for them," said Supervisor Collin Walls.

According to a memo from Walls to the board, the library is asking for an additional .5 mil over the .5 mil rolled back by the Headlee Amendment.

The library board approved the millage language at a special meeting on April 5. The library board moved unanimously to have the mill-

age ballot question consist of the following wording to be passed on to the township attorney: "Shall a library tax of one-half (1/2) mil be levied for operating purposes of the Springfield Township Library commencing with the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2007?"

Walls said the renewal of both fire and police back up to rates that were approved 10 years ago and settles the issue for another 10 years.

"We asked the township attorney to draft renewal of 1 mil for fire and renewal for 1.5 for police," said Walls. "If it doesn't pass, we would lose eight of our 11 contracts (for police)," said Walls. "Fire would lose it all."

Further millage discussion, described by Walls as "half-hearted" about the general fund millage and parks and rec millage, resulted in both not being left off the

Aug. ballot.

Walls expects the millage topic on the May agenda. In other news:

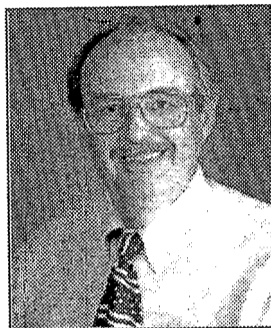
•The board decided they needed more information on the Oakland Wireless initiative before proceeding.

According to Walls, the board had many questions surrounding the level of service, equipment and other basic information the township has not received.

"The bottom line is there was nothing to act on because we don't have any other information besides what we've read in the paper," said Walls. "Aside from the fact I don't have the basics about (Wireless Oakland), if it really provides a free service to residents, I'm all for it."

•A discussion about a requested authorized only swing gate for Jimbar 10 feet off the Big Lake Road intersection failed to result in a motion by the board. Walls said the issue had zero support from the

'If (the millage) doesn't pass we would lose eight of eleven of our contracts (for police)... Fire would lose it all.'

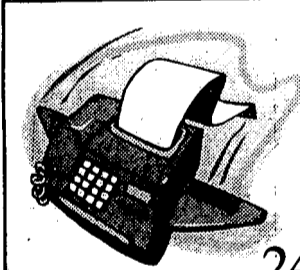


Collin Walls
Springfield Twp. Supervisor

board and that he made some recommendations to citizens involved with the proposal to look into speed reducing measures available through the Road Commission for Oakland County.

"The issue was the fire chief saw no problem with the gate as long as the road was plowed and accessible," said Walls. "There was no way to ensure 12 months of accessibility for emergency vehicles."

An Ember Road resident wrote the letter requesting the swing gate to address resident concern about increased traffic, at higher speeds, if paving takes place in the future. The letter stated, "Specifically, the concern is that motorists traveling on Big Lake Road will use Jimbar/Ember as a quicker thoroughfare to be on pavement, especially at those times that Big Lake Road is in poor condition between Hillsboro and Jimbar."



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What's happening at Parks and Rec

Independence Oaks Parks and Recreation is organizing several softball leagues. There are men's, women's and co-rec leagues. Days and costs vary. The leagues run from early May through July and are played at Clintwood Park. For more information call 248-625-8223.

Registration is already underway for boater's safety classes at the Carriage House at Clintwood Park.

The class is a take home study format. Upon completion, students will receive a Boater's Safety Certificate. The classes are open to anyone ages 12 and up. The cost is \$15 for residents and \$17 for non-residents.



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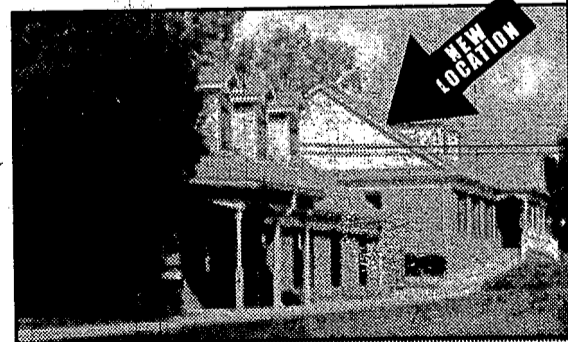
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Trapped in a Catch22

Note: The Clarkston News is withholding last names from this story due to the ages of the children involved.

BY JENNY MATTESON
Clarkston News Editor

Every day millions of Americans depend upon the U.S. justice system to right the wrongs forced upon their lives.

For one Springfield Township woman, righting those wrongs became a more costly matter than she ever imagined as she fights and struggles to pay a \$97,520.70 debt issued by the Oakland County Courts.

The crime

On July 21, 2002, life came crashing around Tracy when she learned her ex-husband was sexually abusing their three children – Amanda, Gary and Ashley.

That day, her then 10-year-old daughter Ashley came home, crying, and requiring medical attention for assault.

"The children had spent that Sunday with their father," said Tracy. "Ashley came home, and she had been sexually assaulted. I immediately took her to the hospital, and they called the police."

On August 22, 2002, Tracy's ex-husband was interviewed by police. According to Tracy, he confessed in writing to sexually abusing all three children.

The court case

Authorities brought charges against the father on behalf of all three children. A court case combining the charges regarding Amanda and Ashley began in Pontiac 50th District Court in September 2002.

He pled no contest and was found guilty on Sept. 16, 2003 in Oakland County Circuit Court.

In regards to Amanda he was charged with criminal sexual conduct second degree; and in regards to Ashley he was charged with two counts of criminal sexual conduct first degree. All charges were in regards to a minor and relation.

On Nov. 5, 2003, he was sentenced to 10-50 years for his crimes against Ashley and 71 months to 15 years for his crimes against Amanda. He is to serve the two sentences simultaneously and is not eligible for parole until March 2013.

A second court case

Throughout the criminal proceedings involving her daughters' abuse, Tracy said she dealt with several prosecutors.

"I never even met or saw them until we were in the courtroom," explained Tracy.

At one point in 2003, Tracy said the prosecutor leading the case approached her to initiate termination of her ex-husband's parental rights. Authorities were concerned the father would force visitation with the children while in prison.

For the trial, the court appointed a Guardian Ad Litem/attorney Paul Baker to represent the children.

The father's parental rights were terminated on September 28, 2003.

The trouble begins

Tracy said throughout the court case her daughter Ashley struggled emotionally and mentally with the situation and her life. Her youngest daughter could not cope with



Tracy spends hours and hours talking on the phone and e-mailing government officials to try and find help for her dilemma. Photo by Jenny Matteson

what was done to her.

"Most of her suffering began after the sentencing," said Tracy.

"She was very angry. She was like a time bomb. She busted up the home and came at me with a knife at one point. She was not controllable," said the desperate mother. "She was thrown out of school for stealing and making false allegations. She even began acting out sexually against her brother."

The day after Ashley reported her father's assaults, she began receiving treatment through a day program at New Oak-

land Child-Adolescent and Family Center in Davisburg. In 2003, Tracy's current husband Donald's insurance paid for the care.

Ashley was receiving out-patient treatment off and on throughout 2004. On Dec. 6, 2004, she was admitted to Havenwyck Hospital in Auburn Hills for full-time observation. The placement was by recommendation of the Family Independence Agency and authorities with the Oakland County Sheriff's Office Springfield Township substation.

Please see Tracy, page 13A

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Tracy

Continued from page A12

On Dec. 16, 2004, Tracy's problems grew even larger. Donald's insurance refused to pay for Ashley's full-time care. Doctors with Havenwyck Hospital contacted Tracy and said the child could not be released. Ashley was still not well.

A new trial

According to Tracy, she was contacted at this time by FIA and told she had limited choices.

"They basically said these are your options: you take her home and we are removing your other children and charging you with child endangerment, or you leave her there, she gets the help she needs and we file child abandonment and neglect charges on you," Tracy said, frustration in her voice.

"What can you do? I needed to help my child. She needed care that I couldn't afford."

Tracy did not contact an attorney at this time. She said she received advice to contact Easter Seals for assistance, but was told the organization would only assist with in-home care, not hospitalization.

After searching and searching, but unable to find the money for Ashley's care by Dec. 21, 2004, Tracy accepted the abandonment and neglect charges - allowing Ashley to become a ward of the state.

Trouble grows worse

Tracy believed everything was taken care of until Feb. 5, 2006 when she received a letter from the Oakland County Circuit Court Department of Reimbursement.

The letter stated Tracy was responsible to pay for the children's GAL/attorney from the father's parental rights termination case, the cost of Ashley's care at Havenwyck and all costs associated with Ashley's foster care.

The total bill, as of April 16, 2006, is \$97,520.70.

"I can't believe this. We didn't have this money before, why would we have it now?" asked Tracy. "I let them take her away because I didn't have the money. Why do they think I can pay this?"

Tracy said she contacted multiple government agencies and officials: Victim Services, Restitution, Friend of the Court, Juvenile Court Mental Health Division, The Michigan Bar Association, Gov. Granholm's Office, Sen. Cherry's Office, Rep. John Stakoe's Office and State Prosecutor David Gorcyca.

"No one could seem to help me. Every office I called kept telling me they couldn't go after (the children's father) because his parental rights were terminated. Besides, he's in prison and the court doesn't want to wait that long for the money," said Tracy.

"The restitution department said we didn't get restitution in the first place because Donald's insurance was covering her care at the time. Everybody I've called and told I don't understand this has said, 'If you don't like

the laws - call your legislators and change them.'

"I just don't understand how someone can hurt you so badly, and you have to pay for it again and again."

Too many questions

Phone call after phone, Tracy said she reached dead ends. She eventually e-mailed Clarkston News Assistant Publisher Don Rush in desperation:

"When the court system terminated his parental 'rights,' it also terminated his 'responsibilities' to the children... I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE TWO GO HAND IN HAND!

"His 'rights' should have been terminated due to the fact that he committed a crime against them. His 'responsibilities' should not have been terminated due to the fact that he helped make these children... and just because he is in jail is not an excuse.

"I feel the whole justice system is being two faced when it comes to the issues of 'rights' and 'responsibilities.'

"The justice system takes away a person's 'right' to freedom by placing them into prison for committing a crime. Yet the justice system expects the criminal to take 'responsibility' for the crime that he committed by admitting it and learning that it was wrong.

"In this situation, 'rights' and 'responsibilities' do not go hand in hand, yet when it comes to other situation, they do. I guess what it all boils down to is... what's in the eyes of the justice system is the only eyes that count, in the eyes of the justice system!"

What now?

Tracy contacted Pontiac appeals lawyer Kevin Laidler to handle her case.

According to Laidler, he is attempting to accomplish two things regarding the situation:

- Get the restitution order for the children's father changed, and
- Get the monthly amount Tracy is required to pay changed.

Laidler said at this time no paperwork has been filed and he is waiting for her final monthly payment amount to be calculated. He does not anticipate to get the restitution order changed easily.

"The issue ends up about big pockets," said Laidler. "Tracy has bigger pockets than the rapist father.

"Somebody has to pay for it somewhere - and the parents should be paying for their children. It's not fair, but the county is set up that way. They put it on the victim to pick up the tab on their own treatment."

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Her newest fear

Tracy's newest concern is becoming trapped in the same situation - emotionally and financially - with her son Gary.

Gary, who is now 15, is mentally and physically handicapped due to a car accident. Authorities began prosecuting charges on his behalf against his father this past week.

Gary's father is charged with three counts of criminal sexual conduct in the first degree involving a minor.

According to Tracy, the trial was rescheduled twice and adjourned once before opening last week. Paperwork Tracy possesses shows Prosecutor Rob Giles leading the case.

"They tell me this is a tricky case because my son is disabled due to a closed head injury he received," said Tracy. "I'm going to have to testify to help make everything clear."

Tracy said her experienced his first day of court this past week. The event was not easy for the child.

"He is aggressive, but I don't know if its because of the sexual abuse or because of his mental condition," said Tracy when asked about her son's behavior.


"I'm terrified we're going to end up in the situation all over again - and I can't afford to pay another \$100,000 for the rest of my life."

Laidler was uncertain whether or not they would attempt to have Tracy's abandonment and neglect conviction overturned.

In addition to working with an attorney, Tracy has spoken again with Senator Cherry's office, who informed her they will research the matter.

The Clarkston News sent a summary of Tracy's situation to Representative John Stakoe, as well as a listing of names and phone numbers for those government agencies involved. A list of questions regarding the matter was also included. We are currently awaiting a response.

In the end, Tracy still sits and waits while a \$97,520.70 debt hangs over her head - and will possibly hang there for the rest of her life.



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Fully funding your IRA should be one of your top investment priorities. Keep in mind that IRAs offer two major benefits:

- **Tax advantages** - If you have a traditional IRA, your earnings have the potential to grow tax deferred, so your money can grow faster than it would in an investment on which you paid taxes every year. (You will eventually have to pay taxes on your earnings, but, by then, you may be in a lower tax bracket.) Also, depending on your income level, your contributions may be tax-deductible. When you have a Roth IRA, you can withdraw your contributions at any time, free of taxes. You can also take out earnings, free of taxes, as long as you don't begin withdrawals until you are 59-1/2 and you've had your account for at least five years.
- **Variety of investment options** - You can invest your IRA in virtually any security you choose - stocks, bonds, Treasury bills, certificates of deposit, etc. In fact, you're not confined to just one type of investment within your IRA; you can create a diversified portfolio containing a variety of holdings.

Given these tax advantages and this investment flexibility, it's almost certainly a good idea to "max out" on your IRA every single year. Of course, it's not always that easy to come up with \$5,000 at one time, but you don't have to. You can fund your IRA over the course of a year by putting in about \$416 per month. And, to make it even easier for you to completely fund your IRA, you could have that \$416 moved automatically, via a bank authorization, from your checking or savings account to your IRA.

On the other hand, if you can possibly afford to pay the full \$5,000 in the first few weeks of the year, you may well end up with more money in the long run. That's because you'll be giving your money more time to grow - and, as an investor, time can be your greatest ally.

But however you do it - over 12 months or right away - put the full amount into your IRA. Along with your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, your IRA is one of the best retirement-savings vehicles you have available. And now that you are on the "plus" side of 50, you'll want to really focus your efforts on making sure you have the resources available to enjoy the retirement lifestyle you deserve.

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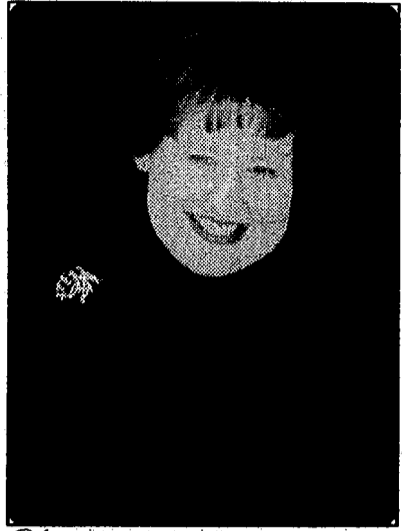
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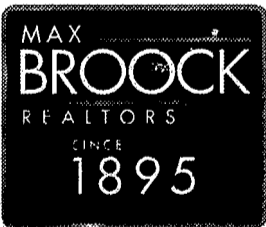
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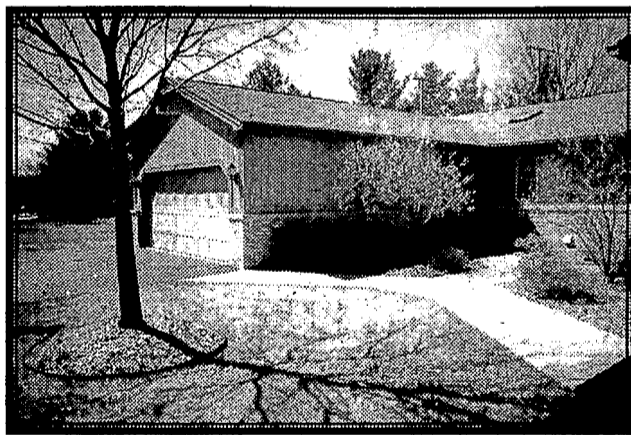
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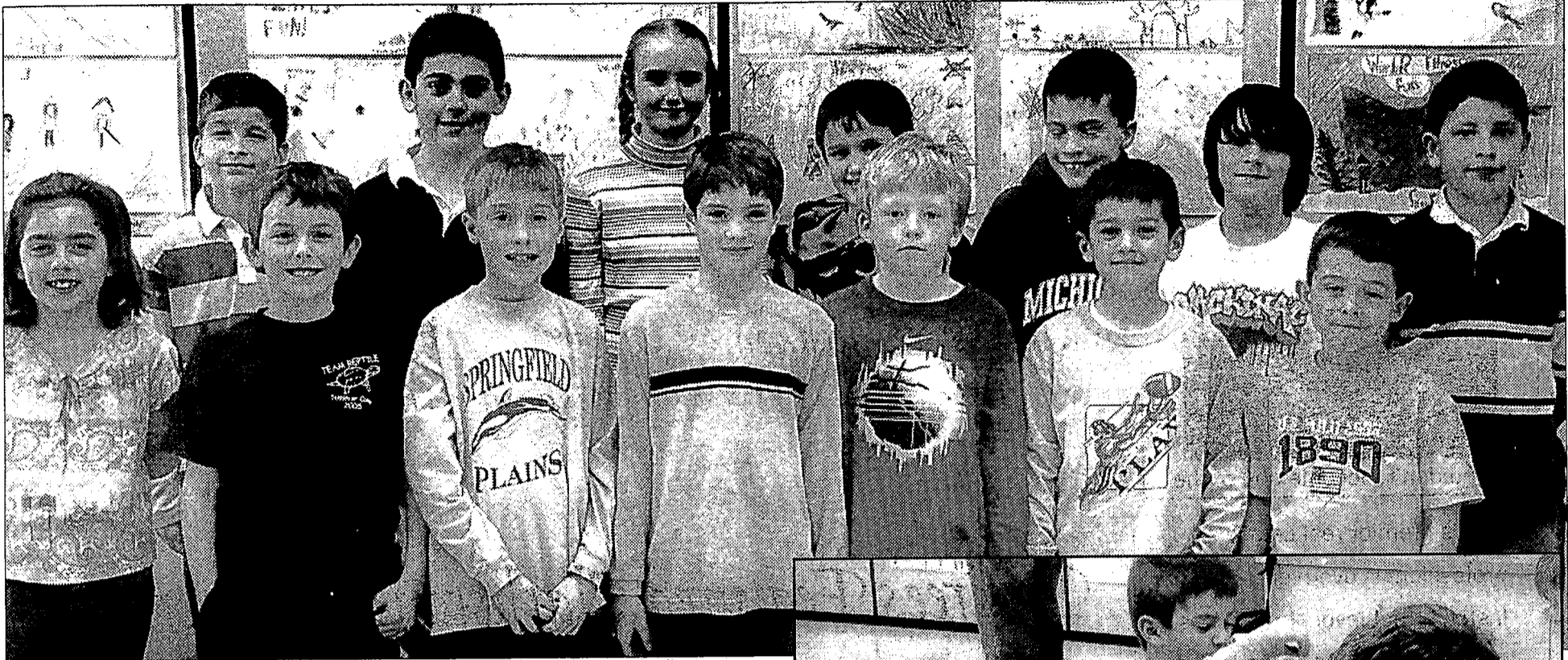
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The SPE chess club is pictured below: Brooke Huisman, Nicholas Moore, Jake Sain, AJ Schlaff, Patrick Wesley, Evan Cole, Wyatt Jones, Nicholas Zakucia, Andrew Dalrymple, Nathaniel Jenkins, Isaac Mansour, Mary Schlaff, Joey Verhelle and Jonathan Schlaff.

Make your move...

The Springfield Plains Elementary chess club was joined by students from Andersonville and Pine Knob Elementaries for an inter-school chess tournament on April 3. Students had 30 minutes for an entire match. Some ran over and had to be scored by pieces remaining, while others ended in as few as seven moves.

Photos by Andrew DuPont



Pictured above, AE student Sarah Bertram studies the board in a matchup against SPE student Nick Zakucia.

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Survey

Continued from page A1

nancial difficulties due to the slow economy."

Several responders appeared to not understand the question.

The term "taxation without representation" is often applied to non-homestead millages since non-homestead property owners do not necessarily live where they own the property.

For example, those who do not live within the Clarkston School district, but do own non-homestead property there, do not vote on the district issues. Those non-resident property owners do not vote on school board members or school millages.

"No - people voted in 1994."

"School board members are voted into office. They set the millage rate."

"Of course. However, that is what the majority of voters agreed upon when Proposal A was approved."

"No! Your are represented through the officials in your community."

Another side

The surveys showed that 23 respondents, who do not own non-homestead property, think the non-homestead millage is not "taxation without representation."

Of those remaining: 11 who do not own non-homestead property feel the millage is "taxation without representation," 8 who do own non-homestead property also feel the tax is so and 4 who own non-homestead property feel it is not. Six surveys were listed as providing no re-

sponse if they did not answer one question or the other definitively.

A final review

After looking through all 52 surveys, a majority of the respondents who support the Clarkston Schools millage do not own non-homestead property. Twenty-three individuals fell into this category.

However, the remaining responses were fairly mixed:

- 12 responders do not own non-homestead property and do not support the millage.
- 8 do own non-homestead property and do not support the millage.
- 3 do own non-homestead property and do support the millage.

Six surveys were counted as not responding due to the respondent either not answer either question or not providing a definitive answer to either question.

What we learned...

The Clarkston News found the 52 surveys to be highly informative. We discovered information our readers did not know and wanted, as well as learned their opinions on several topics.

The final question we asked our readers was if they have any question for the Clarkston School district. We are compiling those questions and will be forwarding them to district officials.

Please look in future issues of The Clarkston News for responses.

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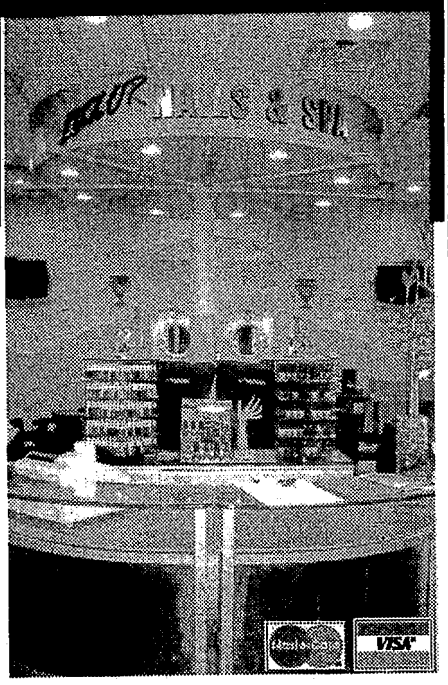
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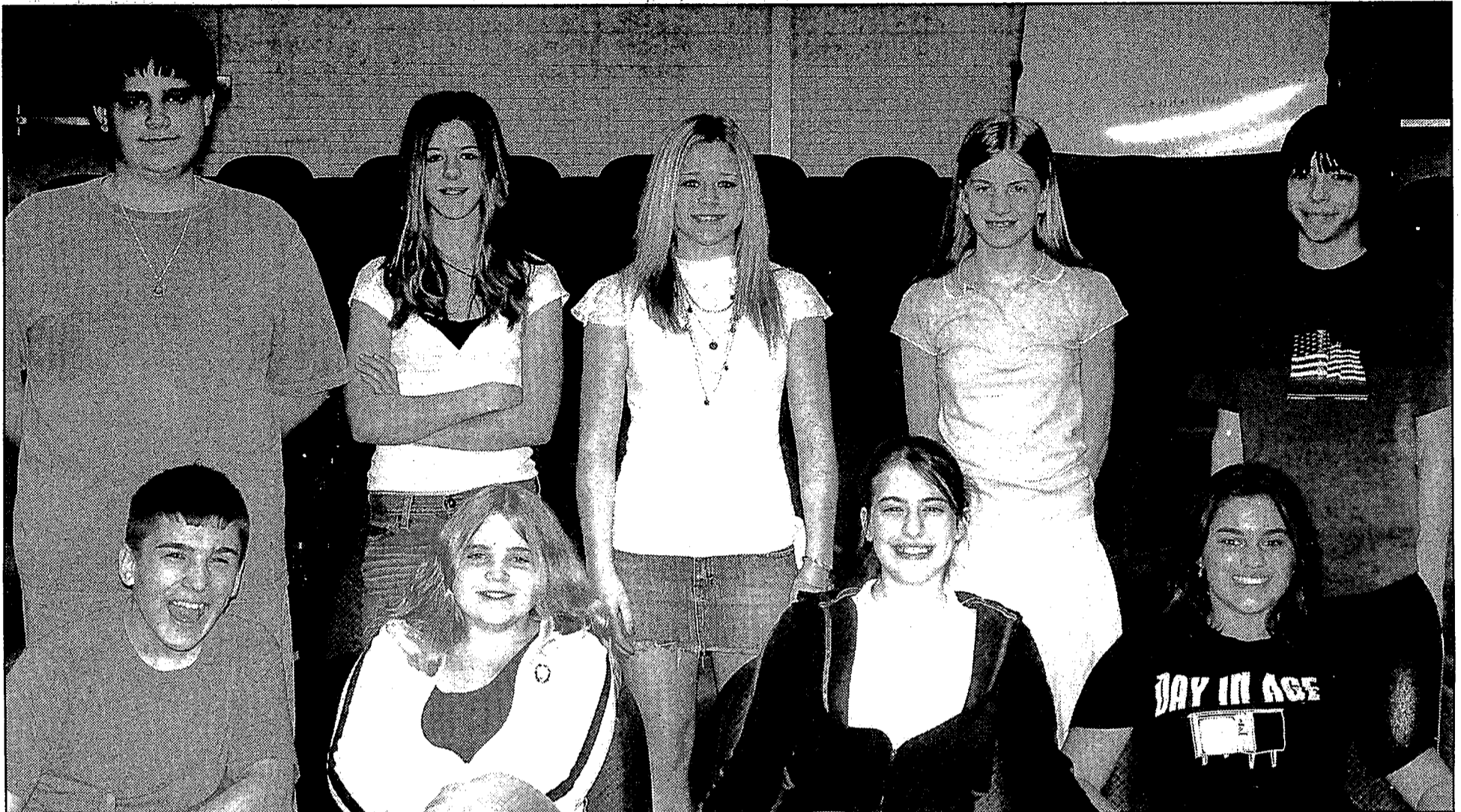
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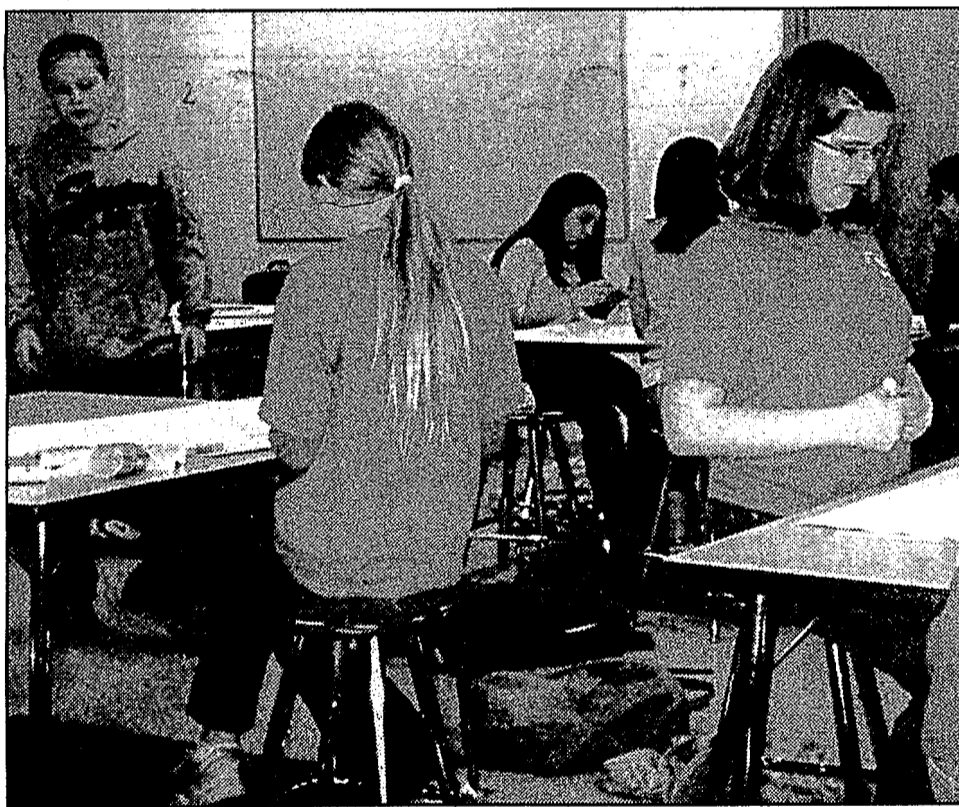


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Junior High School forensics team does it again



On March 25, members of Clarkston Junior High School's forensics team competed in the second and final state competition of the school year at Wayne State University. In total, nine team members competed in eight events, bringing home two trophies, two plaques and four blue ribbons. Pictured are Matt Cross, Chelsea Rawe, Liz Abel, Morgan Brisse, Ben Armes, Julia Turner, Jessica Stiles, Amy Swayne and Dennis Kline. Photo by Andrew DuPont



A fond farewell...

The fifth-grade Optimists Alpha Club members at Pine Knob Elementary spent their last meeting saying goodbye to their school and teachers and encouraging fourth graders to join the club next year. During the last four months, club members

learned about SCUBA diving and interacting with dolphins and sharks through guest speaker Jim Evans, brought in donations for Lighthouse PATH, took a field trip to a fire station and learned about watersheds through

guest Sue Julian of North Oakland Headwaters and Land Conservancy. Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor for the PKE Alpha Club next year can contact the adult club president Kelly Kostin at 248-620-1030.

Students enjoy their last meeting at PKE. Photo provided

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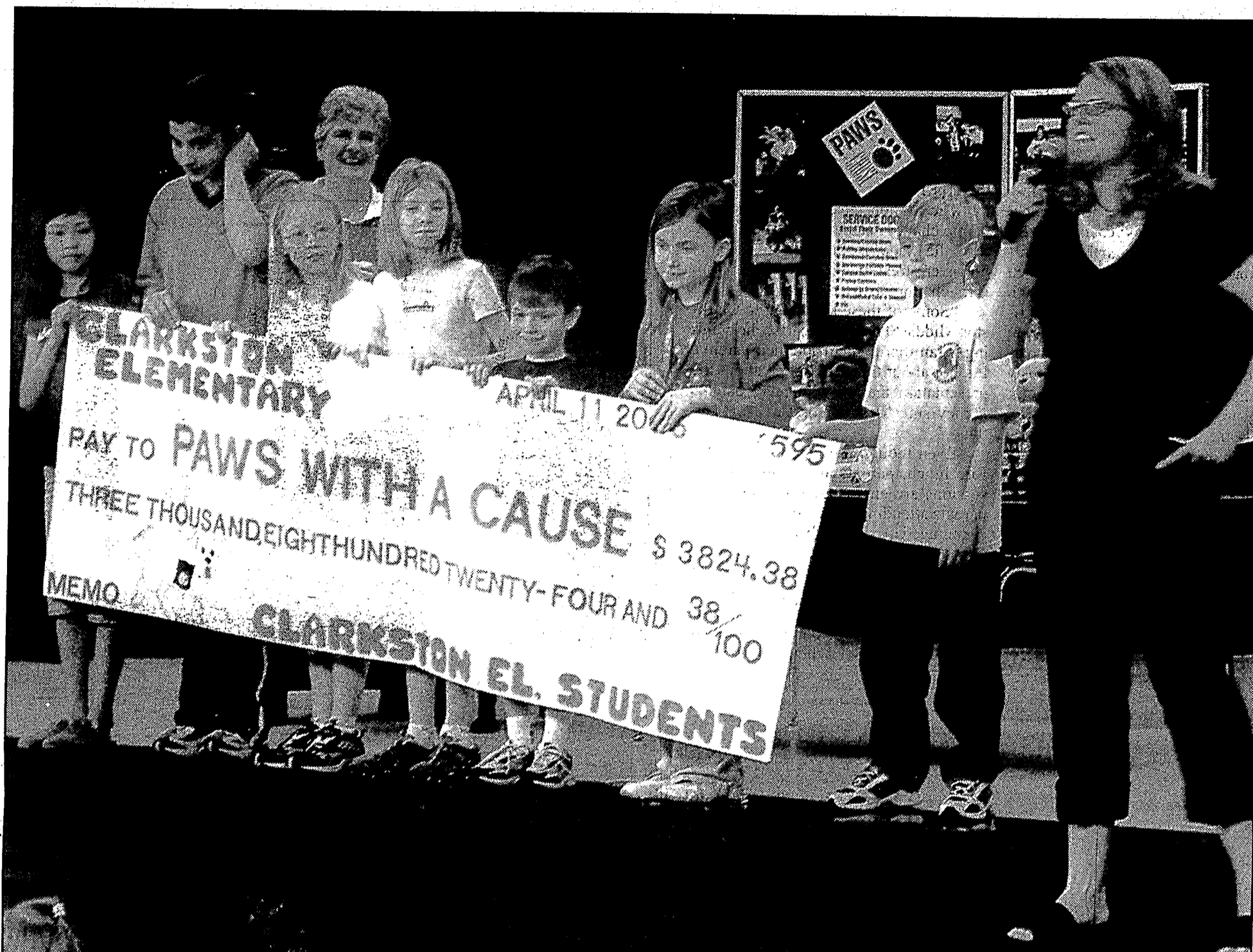
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CE students lend some helping PAWS



Students at Clarkston Elementary did more than read during March Is Reading Month. Together, the students worked to raise support and awareness for PAWS with a Cause, which trains assistant dogs for people with disabilities. The halls of the school were decorated with photos and student artwork showing the good work PAWS does and encouraging others to help. On April 11, the top readers in each grade were rewarded at an all-school assembly and together they unveiled a check for the money raised by the entire school. *Photo by Andrew DuPont*

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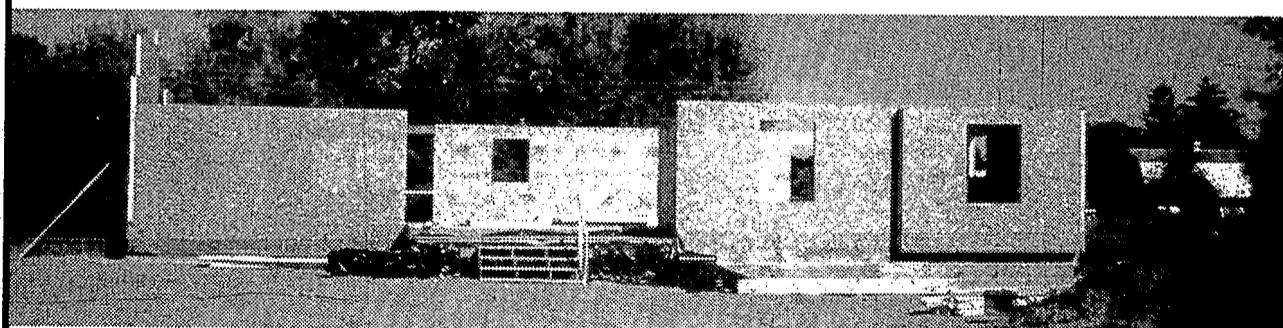
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School District plans 'Healthy Transitions'

BY ANDREW DUPONT
Clarkston News Staff Writer

A goal of Clarkston Schools repeated on several occasions is to "keep kids younger for longer."

But eventually kids have to grow up and learn about issues that will effect them as teenagers and adults.

District officials decided that the transition between middle school and junior high is an ideal time to begin discussing these issues and will launch a new "healthy transitions" program this year on May 10.

All seventh graders and their parents are encouraged to attend the event, which will take place at Clarkston Junior High School. There will be a morning and afternoon set of presentations. Students are required to be in school that day, are parents can attend as well - simultaneously attending a different set of presentations.

The program is being coordinated by Carla Teare, the Safe and Drug Free Schools coordinator for Clarkston Schools.

Teare said the program will not focus just on negative things to avoid, but encourage students to seek out ways to improve their lives.

Teare said the programs for parents will help them understand the issues their children are likely to face in the near future and suggest ways to increase communication.

"We really believe that we want our parents involved in the education process as well," Teare said.

Coupled with the move from one building to another, Teare said the seventh to eighth grade jumped seemed like the ideal time to reach out to students. Key topics for students include sexuality and drug education.

"They're at the age where this is going to be the challenge. They're going to be at crossroads where they're going to say 'Okay, I am going to try something or I'm not,'" Teare said.

The sessions also focus on the academic changes students will experience from the grade and building shift. Teare, however, stressed the academic program is much more than a building tour.

"Some of these kids went to Clarkston Middle School last year, so the building is familiar to them and their parents. It's not about that... it's more about the presentation, the connecting with parents if they stay for lunch and that kind of thing."

Even though presentations end before lunch, parents attending morning sessions are encouraged to stay, while parents attending afternoon sessions are encouraged to come early and have lunch with their children to discuss the content of their lessons.

Students are not the only ones who can benefit from these lessons though. According to Teare, parents might be surprised to see what their kids are facing compared to what they faced at the same age.

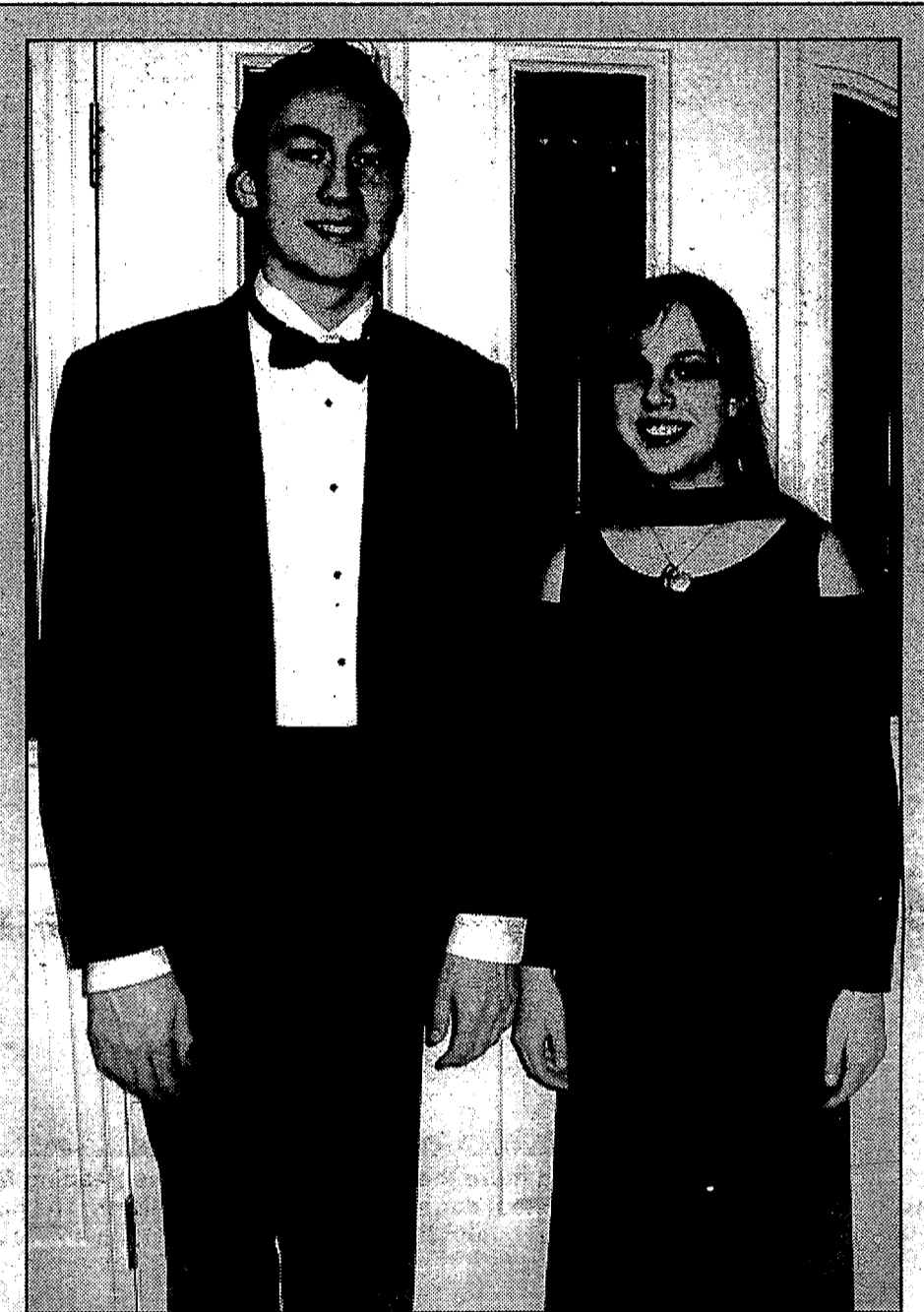
"There's so much out there in the

media for these kids. They're way older than (their parents') generation was, growing up in terms of what they see and hear. Not in age, but definitely in exposure," Teare said.

While students are learning what to expect over the next few years of their education and social lives, parents can learn about what to expect from presentations by Bob Philips and Barb Flis on "What Every Parent Needs to Know."

The presentations cover topics like drugs, sexuality, academic success, healthy relationships, health and communication.

There is no need to RSVP, interested parents or guardians can simply arrive at school on May 10 and attend presentations. Morning presentations being at 8 a.m. Lunch runs from 10:40-11:10 a.m. Afternoon presentations are preceded by lunch running from 11:25 - 11:55 a.m. Presentations run from Noon - 2:40 p.m.



Shane Lichtenberg and Abigail make up the L² Duet. Photo provided.

Duet succeeds at State level

Shane Lichtenberg, 16, and Abigail Lee, 15, who call themselves the L² Duet were awarded a Division I "Superior" rating at the State Level of the Michigan School Vocal Music Association Festival. The couple sang "O Lovely Peace" by G. H. Handel and "O Divine Redeemer". Participants are judged in tone quality, pitch elements, rhythmic elements, vocal technique, interpretation, presentation and sight reading. The Duet first performed

at the District level where they received a Division I, which then gave them the opportunity to move to the State level. Shane and Abigail participate in the Sashabaw Presbyterian Church Ecumenical Home School Co-op which is called "Meadows Academy" on Maybee Road in Clarkston. They are also members of the Concert Choir of Oakland Homeschool Music Inc. which is a member of MSVMA.

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Clarkston Schools' new administrative assistant

BY ANDREW DUPONT
Clarkston News Staff Writer

If you have attended a Clarkston School Board meeting in the last two months, you would have seen a new person sitting up front, taking notes on the meeting. That would be Heidi McClain, the district's new administrative assistant to the superintendent.

Approximately two months ago, McClain, 35, took over for Helen Whitehead, who took up a new position in Community Education. McClain graduated from Western Michigan University with a bachelors degree in public relations and journalism. Before coming to Clarkston, McClain worked in the Oakland School district in special education and most recently as the Federal Grants Coordinator. McClain said the move to Clarkston was a career decision.

"I wanted a career, not just a job change and this position offers that," McClain wrote in an e-mail to *The Clarkston News*. "I also have a deep appreciation for public education and have always wanted to be a part of something that exists to help our children be successful."

As an administrative assistant, McClain handles a variety of communications for Superintendent Dr. Al Rob-

erts and the Board of Education. Her responsibilities include taking calls, typing corresponding, maintaining calendars and attending and taking minutes at a variety of meetings including school board meetings.

"Like anything, it has been a learning process. I feel very comfortable with my responsibilities, and I'm enjoying getting to know all the names and faces. Ellen worked with me for a couple days and was wonderful in helping me get to know people and the main functions of the job," McClain wrote.

McClain currently resides in Grand Blanc with her husband Bill and two children - Kylie, 6 and Griffin, 2. McClain said she and her husband lived in Clarkston briefly after getting married, and since returning to work in the district she has been nothing but impressed.

"The people are truly dedicated and compassionate, and there is a strong feeling of commitment for the work that they do. I could see right away that the district, board and staff are here to serve children, and everyone puts forth 110 percent to do just that!" McClain wrote. "We are in the business of educating children and helping them achieve success, and I'm happy to be a part of that."



Heidi McClain, the new administrative assistant to the superintendent of Clarkston Schools. Photo by Andrew DuPont

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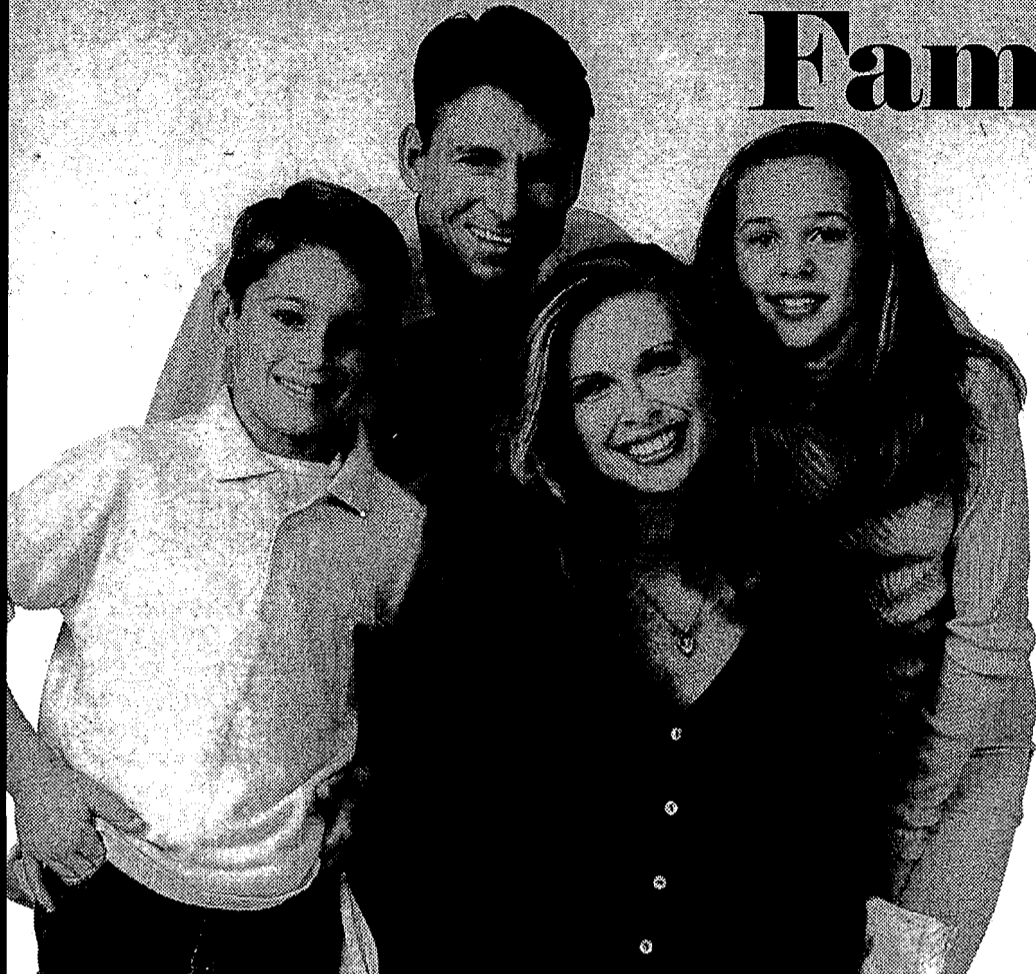
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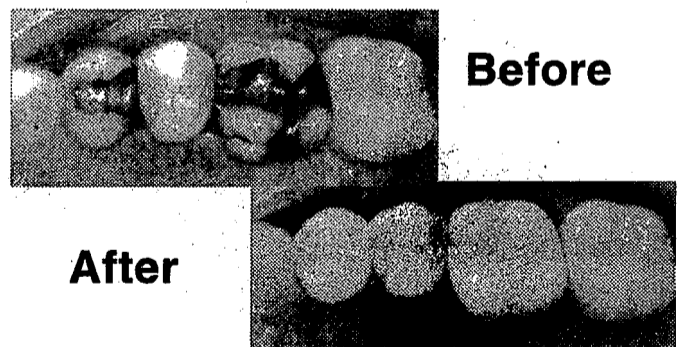
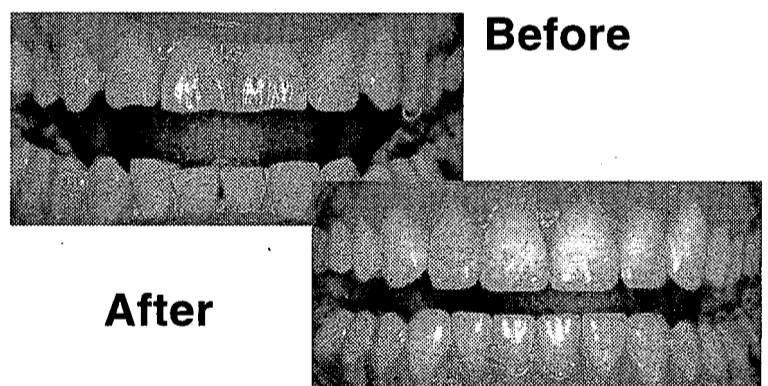


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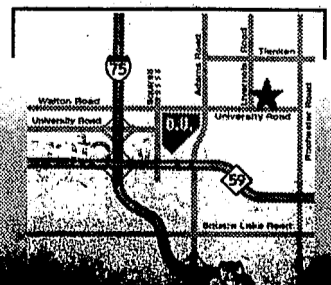
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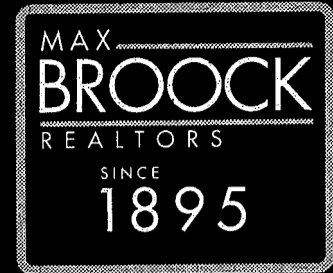


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7490 Ellingrove - White Lake
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3020 Edgefield - Waterford
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2583 Newberry - Waterford
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1136 Moccasin - Waterford
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Clarkston News Sports

Athlete of the Week – Faith Lieder *Female wrestler earning national recognition*

BY DAVE PEMBERTON
Clarkston News Sports Writer

Beware Sashabaw Middle School boys, there's a girl at your school you don't want to mess with and her name is Faith Lieder. The reason is she's well trained wrestler.

Lieder a sixth grader, finished seventh in her weight class at the USGWA Girls National Championships held at Lake Orion High School on April 1.

Even more impressive than the seventh place finish, Lieder at age 12 was among the youngest at the event, which had girls ranging from 6th to 8th grade.

She earned her entry fee into the national tournament by winning the MYWA Girls Open tournament on March 26 and took third in the USGWA Girls state championship on March 12.

Lieder does not just wrestle against girls. She finished third at the MYWA eastern regionals on March 19 and defeated several boy in the process.

She was also the only girl on the Clarkston Wrestling Club, which finished fourth in the state in the elementary division.

In fact, one of the reasons Lieder got into the sport was because she wanted a chance to beat up some

boys.

"My brother started wrestling and I went to one of the practices," Lieder said. "There were two girls in there wrestling and they were really good. They were beating up all the guys and I thought I could do that."

A little over a year later, Lieder proved she could do just that. Lieder has a nice collection of medals and continues to work hard.

She originally started wrestling because she thought the sport was fun, but now she also wants to be successful.

"The first year I was having fun and also working hard," Lieder said. "This year was a little more serious because I got into more tournaments. I still just try to have fun with it, but

"There were two girls in there wrestling and they were really good. They were beating up all the guys and I thought I could do that."

**– Faith Lieder
Clarkston Club Team
and female wrestler**

I want to win."

Lieder doesn't just wrestle she also plays soccer and swims. Her biggest goals revolve around her wrestling career.

Lieder wants to finish higher than seventh at next year's national championships. She also wants to compete for Clarkston High School's wrestling team.

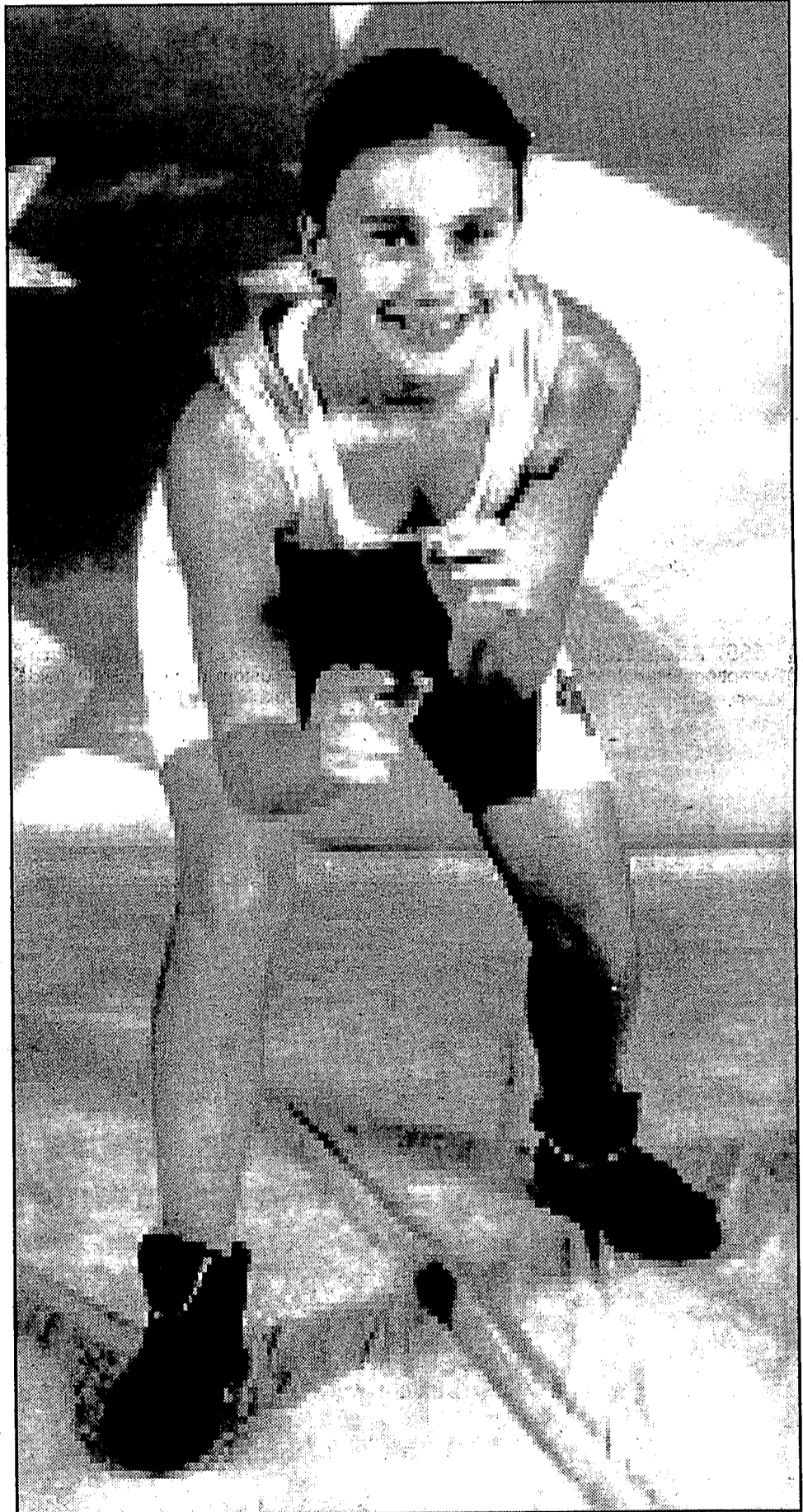
According to Lieder and her father Rick, no girl has ever made the Wolves high school team.

Lieder has big goals for her wrestling career, but knows success isn't only measured by wins and losses.

She likes wrestling for more than just the competition.

"Wrestling teaches you how to deal with a lot of life problems," Lieder said. "It's not just a sport. It teaches you things away from the

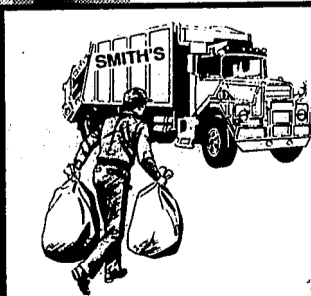
sport. It teaches you good sportsmanship. When you lose a match and your're really mad, you still have to shake the coach's and wrestler's hand."



Lieder is a member of the Clarkston Wrestling Club team, which finished fourth in the state this season. Lieder also wrestles individually.



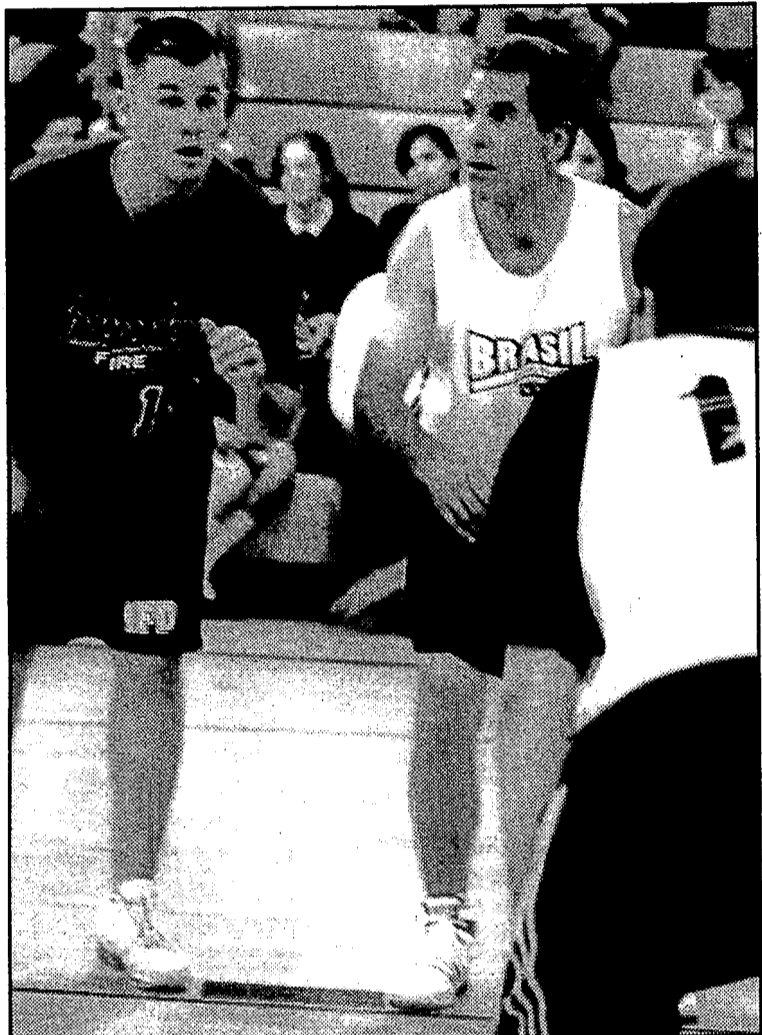
Lieder shows off the medals she has earned.



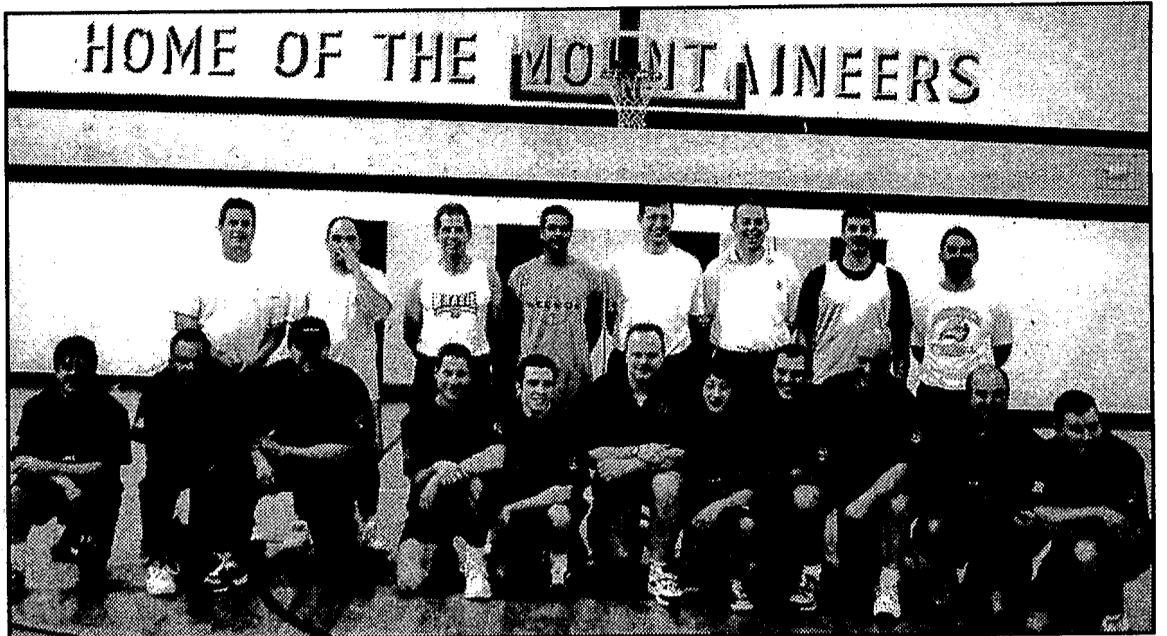
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Everest Coach Mike Madison boxes out against firefighter John Chenet.



Independence Township firefighters stand in front of teachers and coaches from Everest Academy before the charity basketball game played on April 4. Photos provided



(Left to right) Dakota Johnston, Sam Bellestri and Bradley Monsour kept score. Everest Athletic Director Ann Lowney (not pictured) and her husband Pat served as referees.

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Accidents happen, but we can be prepared

By Ernie Harwell

We hear a lot about how we should eat better and exercise to stay healthy. And there's no doubt about it, we need to do those things.

But there are the very practical things we should do to maintain our health and take responsibility for our own safety. For example, it's terribly important to buckle your seat belt every time you ride in a car. There are still far too many people getting hurt or dying in car accidents because they don't buckle up. If people you care about still don't wear seatbelts, help them develop the habit.

We also need to teach our kids how they can protect their health and safety. One way to do this is to make sure they're properly protect when they're riding their bikes or in-line skating. They need to wear helmet and not take unnecessary risks that can lead to broken bones or worse.

By taking these simple precautions, we can dramatically reduce our chances of being injured when accidents happen.

And please remember to take care of our health before it's loomngggg gone.

Ernie Harwell, "the voice of the Detroit Tigers" for more than four decades, retired after 55 years behind a major league microphone. Today, at age 86, Ernie's days are filled with serving as a health and fitness advocate for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, public appearances, writing, traveling and taking long walks with "Miss Lulu," his wife of more than 60 years. His latest book, a collection of his baseball columns entitled "Life After Baseball," is available at local bookstores or by calling 1-800-245-5082.



A Partnership Between Genesys Health System and POH Medical Center

Tennis squad tops Avondale

BY DAVE PEMBERTON
Clarkston News Sports Writer

The Clarkston boy tennis team went into spring break on a winning note. The Wolves earned their first dual meet win of the season by defeating Auburn Hills Avondale 8-0 last Tuesday. The Wolves match with Rochester was canceled due to rain.

The Wolves' No. 3 and No. 4 doubles teams continued their great play. Both doubles teams are undefeated this season. The No. 3 doubles team of senior Thomas Beattie and junior Derek Boatman won their flight 6-3, 6-1 to improve to 3-0 this season. The No. 4 doubles team of senior Trent Rose and senior Blake Curdy won their flight 6-0, 7-5 and are now 6-0 as a team.

"They are consistent and you know what your going to get from them," Clarkston coach Chaz Claus said. "They know what it takes to win and they always contend."

Junior Christopher Graczyk played solid at No. 1 singles. Graczyk defeated Avondale's Josh Kuczeski 6-2, 6-1 to improve his record to 5-1 this season.

Claus was pleased with the convincing win over Avondale. He said the team will comeback from spring break and try to concentrate on winning the OAA II title.

Next week will be pivotal if the Wolves wish to contend for the conference championship. Clarkston will face both Rochester and Rochester Adams, two of the top teams in the league.

Claus said he thinks the team is in a good position to make a run at the title because everyone had a chance to adjust to their new role on the team.

"The lineup to start the season was not solidified," Claus said. "We got that figured out now and everyone has played well this season at times. We just need everyone to play good on the same day."

What Happened/What's Next?



- **Baseball:** 4/12 at Rochester cancelled. Up next: 4/25 at Kettering; 4/26 at Royal Oak Kimball.
- **Softball:** 4/12 at Holly cancelled. Up next: 4/25 at Stevenson; 4/26 vs. Kettering; 4/27 vs. Stoney Creek; 4/28 vs. Utica Ford.
- **Track:** Boys: Southfield 68, Clarkston 61. Up next: 4/25 vs. Troy; 4/27 vs. Lake Orion. Girls: 4/11 Clarkston 88, Southfield 40. Up next: 4/25 vs. Troy; 4/27 vs. Lake Orion; 4/29 at West Bloomfield Invitational.
- **Soccer:** 4/11 West Bloomfield 1, Clarkston 0; 4/12 Rochester Adams 2, Clarkston 0. Up next: 4/25 at Royal Oak Kimball; 4/27 at Farmington
- **Tennis:** 4/11 Clarkston 8, Auburn Hills Avondale 0. Up next: 4/25 vs. Rochester Adams; 4/27 at Farmington; 4/29 at Grand Blanc Invite.
- **Golf:** 4/10 Rochester 190, Clarkston 196; 4/11 Clarkston 184, Rochester Adams 198. Up next: 4/25 at Oakland County Tournament; 4/27 vs. Bloomfield Hills Lahser

Girls track team doubles Southfield's score to remain undefeated in the OAA

BY DAVE PEMBERTON
Clarkston News Sports Writer

The Clarkston girls track team earned their second victory in convincing fashion over Southfield. The Wolves (2-0, 2-0) defeated the Blue Jays 88-40.

Senior sprinter Laura Kupe helped Clarkston win two of the relay events and has won six of the seven events she participated in this season.

"She anchored the relay teams," Clarkston Head Coach John York said. "The last two weeks she has been big for us."

The success the sprinters enjoyed came as a pleasant surprise to York, who knew his distance runners would be strong. The track team features members of Clarkston's cross country team, which won the 2005 state championship.

"The distance runners have done a great job, but no one in particular has stood out," York said.

Four of the distance runners have already earned

spots at Division I colleges: Jennie Morgan (Michigan), Lindsey Smith (Charleston), Lisa Sickman (Winthrop) and Beth Hoekstra (IPFW).

"I think as long as the sprinters keep doing a good job, we will be tough to beat," York said.

The Wolves are off this week because of spring break, but will have some challenges facing them when they return. Clarkston faces both Troy and Lake Orion next week, who are two of the top teams in the OAA I. The Wolves host Troy at 4:30 p.m. on April 25 and host Lake Orion at 4:30 p.m. on April 27.

York said he doesn't think the break will affect his senior dominated team. He believes most of his team will continue to train this week.

Clarkston will likely have good news when it returns. Morgan, who has not competed so far this season will likely be able to compete. She has not ran yet this season because of an injury to her foot she suffered during the cross country season.

Golfers split

The Clarkston girls golf team had mother nature on its side so far this season. Almost every other team has suffered a rainout so far this season, but the golf team has not missed a beat.

Clarkston (2-1, 2-1) split two conference matches. Rochester defeated the Wolves by six strokes, 190-196 on April 10. The loss was Clarkston's first of the season.

The Wolves rebounded on April 11 by defeating Rochester Adams 184-190. Jackie Shram shot a 43 to lead Clarkston and Min-Joo Lee shot a 44.

Clarkston's hits the course again on Tuesday at the Oakland County tournament.

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Varsity Softball 2006



Clarkston's girls varsity softball team is comprised of: Amber Giroux, Kara Wandrie, Amanda Richards, Jessica Palace, Katie Smith, Megan Sperry, Caitlin Morris, Shana Horn, Bailey Mellen, Trisha Martens, Robyn Bernard, Lauren Drumb, Linsey Upchurch, Monique Guerreo, Megan Moehlig and manager Megan Goldberg. The team is coached by Don Peters. Photo by Noah Purcell

Varsity Girls Golf 2006



The Wolves' girls varsity team: (left to right) senior Sarah Galbreath, senior Lu Kuhta, senior Jackie Schram, senior Lindsay Rehm, sophomore Ashley Blanc, senior Courtney Henderson and sophomore Min-Joo Lee.

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A dance to remember

BY JENNY MATTESON
Clarkston News Editor

For those of us with two left feet, the idea of winning a state dance championship is no more reachable than an elusive pot of gold.

For Clarkston High School senior Ashley Shaw, winning is a yearly occurrence.

Ashley, 17, is the first dancer to be crowned with the four top titles available in the Dancer Masters of Michigan Miss Dance contest, held annually since 1966. She was crowned Petite Miss Dance in 1999, Junior Miss Dance in 2001 and Teen Miss Dance in 2003.

Ashley completed her list of titles when she was named "Miss Dance of Michigan" on Jan. 29. With each title, she continued on to the national level and placed as either a first or second runner up.

"I started dancing when I was three," said Ashley.

"I remember my first recital, they couldn't drag me off the stage," Ashley laughed. "Everybody was suppose to hold hands, walk out on stage and bow, and then walk off. They couldn't get me to come off!"

Ashley said she loves performing and being in front of a crowd. Her first experience with dance was with Independence Township parks and recreation.

"At three years old, it was the only thing out there for her to do," said mom Lee Ann. "She did other things, but it always came back to, 'Okay, that was fun. Can I take another dance class?' We just kept letting her."

Ashley has danced at Terri Newman's Dance Shoppe ever since her first experience. At age 10, she qualified for her first national competitions.

"She qualified for two that year. We did them back to back," said Lee Ann, who talked about how she quit work that summer in order to travel with Ashley. "It was a three week trip."

In addition to Dancer Masters, Ashley also competes nationally in the American Dance Awards, where she has won Junior and Teen National Dancer of the Year.

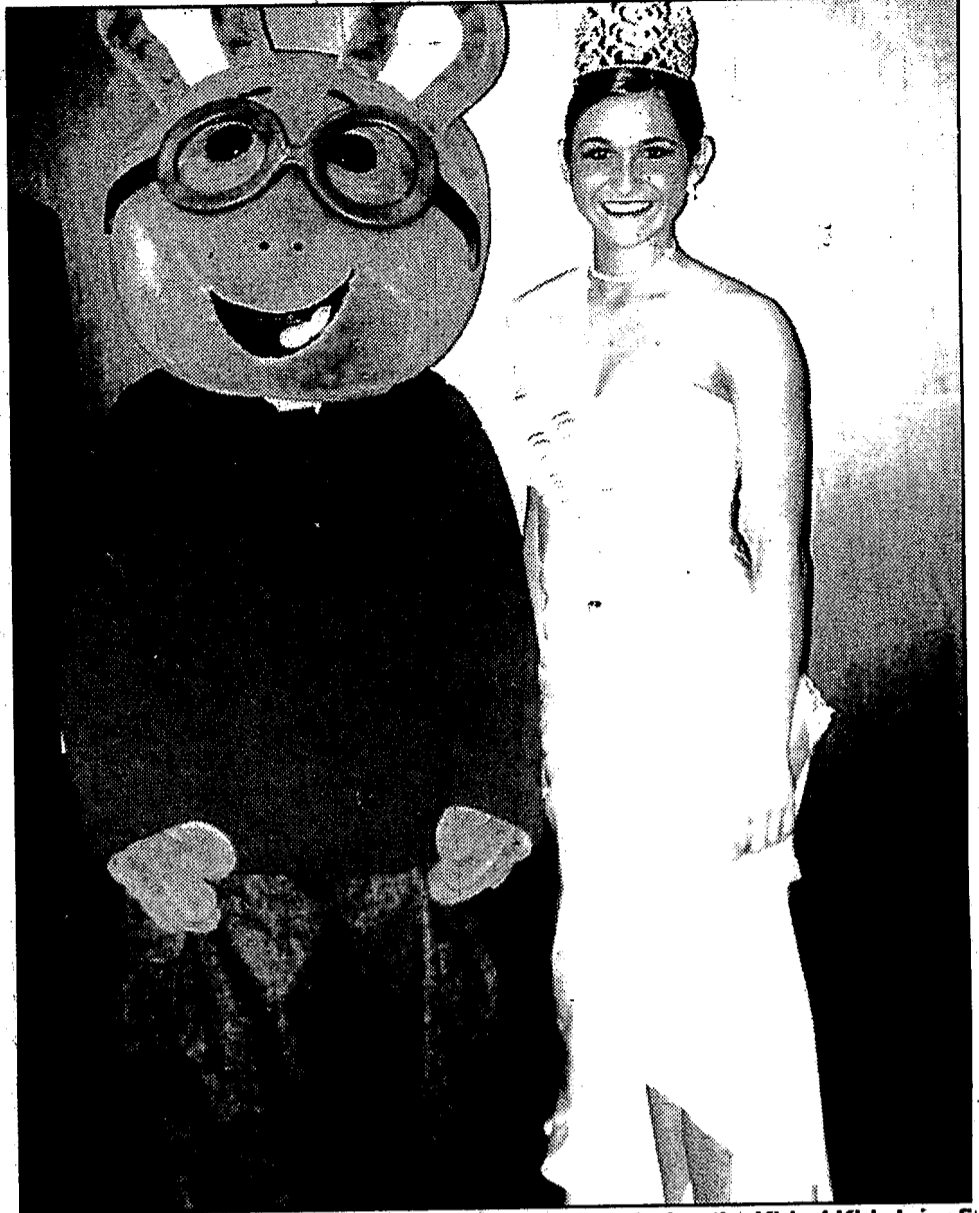
"I think that's actually my favorite competition," said Ashley. "I hope it's okay to say that, but those are the most exciting because those are where I have gone the farthest."

Ashley said she studies all kinds of dance, but prefers lyrical and jazz. She practices around 20 hours a week from September to June, and travels for competitions during the summer. This past year alone, Ashley had 20 different costumes for her performances.

Her future goals include dancing on Broadway. This fall she will attend Chapman University in California to major in dance. She will leave behind in Clarkston mom Lee Ann, dad Dan and brother Jordan, 15.

"It wasn't anything we'd ever thought she would pursue, but we've always supported her in this. If that's where her goals lie, then she can make it happen," said Lee Ann.

"All I want is to be on stage," said Ashley. "Whatever it takes, I want to be on stage."



Clarkston senior Ashley Shaw poses with Arthur during the Kids 4 Kids benefit performance on March 4. All proceeds from the show went to Detroit PBS. Photo provided

Girls Varsity Track 2006



The girls varsity track team is captained by Jenny Morgan, Beth Hoekstra, Laura Kupe, Lisa Sickman, Lyndsay Smith, Meaghan Valley and Erin Hoffman. The team is also comprised of: Molly Goss, Vanessa McGowan, Shelbe Sharette, Rachel Blenc, Andrea Diemart, Katie Devault, Devon Cooley, Tiffany Kincaid, Amanda Hudson, Jessica Green, Olivia Allen, Angela Haight, Caitlin Spinweber, Taylor Rademacher, Lauren Dedow, Eleanor Kuhta, Kelli Thornberry, Lauren Horner, Brittney Ricca, Mellani Balknay, Kaitlyn Warzybok, Brittany Rodgers, Jennifer Cooke, Kara Bogard, Shelbie Raber, Whitney Laderoute, Emily Meissnest, Stephanie Thorstad, Autumn Touchstone, Maddy Dunn, Kristen Smith, Jessica Ray, Ashley Matz, Yvette Cadeau, Stephanie Carlson, Ashley Chamberlein, Dana Johns, Victoria Henney, Jordan Mrošewske, Lauren Frank, Jenna Manilla, Emily Martin, Sarah Canniff, Andi Cavanaugh, Kristen Cross, Johanna Kupe, Devon Rehm, Stephanie Morgan, Ashley Braun, Brianna Reuter, Taylor Frank, Brittany Harris, Cassandra Dobbins, Kelsey Blaubelt, Lindsey Fugitt, Jessica Green, Emily Beattie, Heidi McMahon, Katelyn Schermerhorn, Jill Hoekstra, Jenna Leach, Natalie Stocker, Taylor McGowan, Melissa Martinez and Stephanie Bollini. Photo by Noah Purcell

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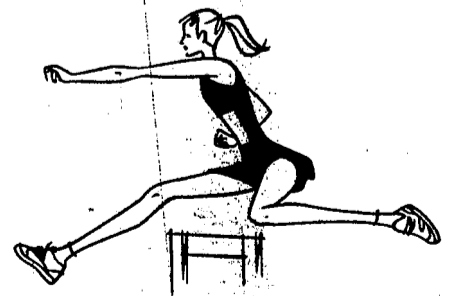
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Salaries

Continued from page A1

- Clarkston \$86,422 to \$96,849
- Walled Lake Consolidated \$87,986 to \$105,584
- West Bloomfield \$85,444 to \$107,534
- Farmington \$98,796 to \$113,616

The Oakland County average for middle school principals ranges from \$92,436 to 106,604 with specific examples being:

- Brandon \$94,636 to \$98,036
- Clarkston \$98,198
- Walled Lake Consolidated \$92,385 to \$110,863
- West Bloomfield \$89,320 to \$111,320
- Farmington \$103,737 to \$119,297

The Oakland County average for high school principals from \$98,931 to \$114,148 with specific examples being:

- Brandon \$98,770 to \$102,170
- Clarkston \$111,291
- Walled Lake Consolidated \$97,004 to \$116,407
- West Bloomfield \$96,918 to \$120,982
- Farmington \$108,924 to \$125,262

The Oakland County average for superintendents salary is \$144,725, with specific examples being:

- Brandon \$126,000
- Clarkston \$142,000
- Farmington \$160,834
- West Bloomfield \$164,278

Similarly sized districts

Approximately 8,000 students are currently enrolled in the Clarkston School district. When compared to disitrets with similar enrollment numbers, Clarkston salary ranges averaged above all others.

Forest Hills in Kent County, which has approximately 8,475 students, has the following salary ranges:

- High school principals: \$81,353 to \$102,209
- Middle school principals: \$81,353 to \$89,605
- Elementary school principals: \$85,850 to \$89,382
- Did not report superintendent's salary

Howell in Livingston County, which has approximately 7,889 students, has the following salary ranges:

- High school principals: \$96,571 to \$100,148
- Middle school principals: \$85,841 to \$90,133
- Elementary school principals: \$83,695 to \$84,768
- Superintendent: \$134,238

West Ottawa in Ottawa County, which has approximately 7,760 students, has the following salary ranges:

- High school principals \$94,247 to \$105,622
- Middle school principals \$83,414 to \$93,841
- Elementary school principals \$81,925 to \$92,352
- Superintendent: \$116,000

All figures from districts other than Clarkston were obtained from the 2005-06 Principal Contract Settlement Report and the Superintendent Contract Settlement Report from the Michigan Association of School Boards. Clarkston figures were obtained from the district.

Averages did not include numbers from every district in each county because not every district participated. Clarkston did not participate.

None of the numbers reported included benefit packages. Look in next week's issue of *The Clarkston News* for information regarding benefit packages and how they compare to other districts.

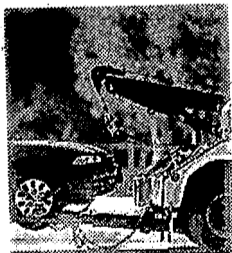
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More District Wages

• **Paraeducators** are paid on a five-level system that increases with experience and education. The hourly pay scale ranges from \$10.53 for a first-year employee with a high school education to \$13.39 for an employee with a masters degree and at least five years experience. An additional \$0.32 per hour is added after 10 years of continuous service, an additional \$0.16 per hour after 15 years.

• **General custodians** are paid on a six level system based on experience. The hourly scale ranges from \$13.92 to \$18.20 with a shift premium of \$0.13 for working second shifts and \$0.18 for working third shifts. Custodians receive an additional \$0.20 per hour after 10 years of continuous employment and \$0.10 per hour after 15.

• **Bus drivers** are paid on a five-level system based on experience. The hourly scale ranges from \$12.50 to \$16.98 with an additional \$0.46 per hour after 10 years, \$0.24 per hour after 15 years and \$0.20 after 20 years of continuous service.

• **Head Mechanics** and mechanics are paid on a five-level system based on experience. The hourly scale for head mechanics ranges from \$17.26 to \$21.38. The hourly scale for mechanics ranges from \$15.95 to 19.76.

• **Office clerks** are paid on a five-level scale based on experience. The hourly scale ranges from \$10.83 to \$12.56. Secretaries are paid on a seven-level scale based on experience. The hourly scale ranges from \$11.95 to \$17.46. Both positions recieve an additional \$0.70 per hour after 10 years and an additional \$0.13 per hour after 15 years of continuous service.

All pay rates for these positions increase by two percent for the 2006-07 school year.

The Clarkston News requested individual salary information for several department director/supervisor positions. The following information was provided in response to that request. The district has not yet provided specific salaries for the positions.

• **Director of Food Services Janet Allen** is paid on a five level salary scale that maxes at \$60,714.

• **Director of Communications and Marketing Anita Banach** is paid on a five-level salary scale that maxes at \$65,742.

• **Supervisor of Testing and Evaluation Stacie Puzio** is paid on a five-level scale starting at \$68,000

• **Director of Transportation Kevin Bickerstaff** is paid on a six-level scale that maxes at \$83,839.

• **Director of Building and Grounds Wes Goodman** is paid on a six-level scale that maxes at \$83,839.

Delasko

Continued from page A3

a job with Oakland County Parks at Groveland Park, a camp ground park.

The job led him to getting the park supervisor job at Independence Oaks.

He worked with the designers of the park on where the trails should be; and once the park opened, set up how the park would work from scratch.

"It was definitely a challenge," Delasko said. "Usually when you go into a new job the setup is already there. Your desk is there and people explain to you this is your job, and you follow a routine.

"There wasn't any routine out here because nothing existed before. I was responsible for ordering the equipment and even setting up when you were going to mow the grass."

When the park first opened, almost everything was ran from Delasko's home. The park mechanics worked in his garage and his wife acted as the unofficial park secretary by answering his house phone.

Today, the park features a beach, boat rentals, a nature center and a gazebo for special events. Delasko helped make the park into a great place.

"To see the park develop from a design on a sheet of paper to a reality is neat," Delasko said. "Not many people can say, 'I helped create this place.' I saw the park develop and it continues to develop."

Independence Oaks is full of good memories for

Delasko and some unusual ones. He remembers when construction began on the park. The construction workers found tons of rattlesnakes on the park grounds. He also remembers helping rescue a little girl, who got lost at the park, and another time when they had to battle a forest fire.

One of the more unusual incidents came during the park's early years. A man was raising cattle near the south end of the park and one of his bulls got loose on park grounds.

"One of my guys tried to lasso it and nearly got pulled out of the truck," Delasko said. "The owner finally came and got a hold of it. The bull was like 1,500 pounds. You don't want to mess with that."

Delasko won't miss problems like the bull, but there is plenty he will miss. He said he will miss the special events the most. In particular the classic car show, the hay rides and dressing up for Halloween.

He will also miss seeing some of the people he developed friendships with over the years, including former employees. He said many former employees worked while they were in college, but always came back to visit.

"People who used to work here will bring their kids, and some of those kids would bring their kids," Delasko said. "It was three generations of people coming back. When I saw that I thought, 'Wow, I've been here a long time. Maybe it's time for me to retire.' But people who work here always fall in love with the park."

After 37 years as park supervisor, it's likely nobody is more in love with Independence Oaks than Delasko.

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Letters

Continued from page 6A
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And the hospital? Rochester Hills has the modern Crittenton Hospital, with a reputation for excellence in several health specialties.

Clarkston is dicker with three hospital conglomerates to build here, but the first shovel in the ground is years away. The township board is not sensitive to the fact that the population is aging at a rate that is faster than their decision-making - and the time for urgency in planning is now.

Treatment for diabetes and Parkinson's is required by my family on an immediate basis, not five or 10 years down the road. By relocating to Rochester Hills, we'll be able to take advantage of their advancements in health care and their focus on seniors, not to mention the fast-improving retail shopping scene.

Few residents of Clarkston realize the crucial need that exists for positive action on the senior center facility. The opponents of the project who often express their terribly misguided opinions in these pages don't have a clue as to how the project will revitalize the township and cast a positive glow over Independence Township for years to come, causing other developments to blossom here.

In the meantime, I look forward to enjoying the outstanding amenities of a city on the move, where we once brought up our three boys, and where we can learn, work out, be entertained and nourish our curiosity.

We wish you success in your upcoming election.
Harry Knitter,, Independence Township

Editor's Note: Good luck Nancy and Harry. We'll miss your energy and dedication - not to mention tongue in cheek satire!

Twp. needs to use time more efficiently

Dear Editor,
 For those of you who missed Thursday's Planning commission meeting, April 13, I thought I would bring you up to speed.

We spent two hours discussing files for a planned unit development that is not even approved by the Independence Township Board. It hasn't been approved or denied yet because the attorneys haven't been able to produce the documents.

It appears that Independence has taken the back seat to Brandon Township. The firm that represents us currently is Karlstrom and Cooney. I was told they also represent Brandon Township and did prior to us hiring them.

The problem is what used to take a few weeks from the past attorneys now takes months and months and months. With limited land left in the township to develop, it seems very risky to me that a firm that is not making Independence their number one priority represents us. More importantly, wasting the Planning Commission's time reviewing projects that may never come to light.

I feel we should be using our time more efficiently to focus on more important zoning and planning issues. I just thought everyone should know what is going on.

Thanks,
Sam Moraco, Planning Commissioner

Got an opinion to share? Let us know!
Write a letter to the editor

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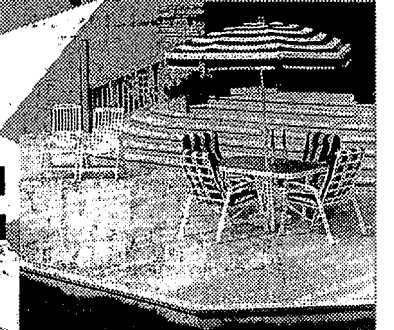
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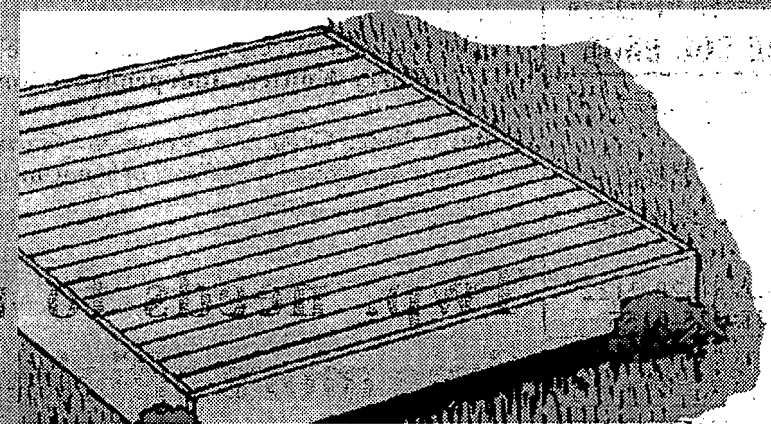
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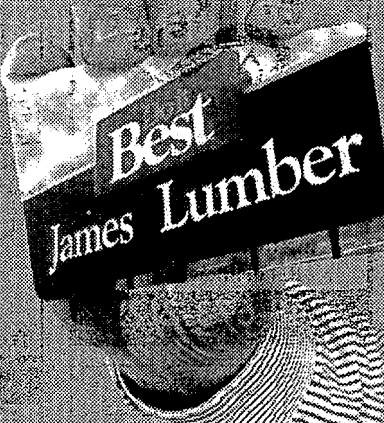
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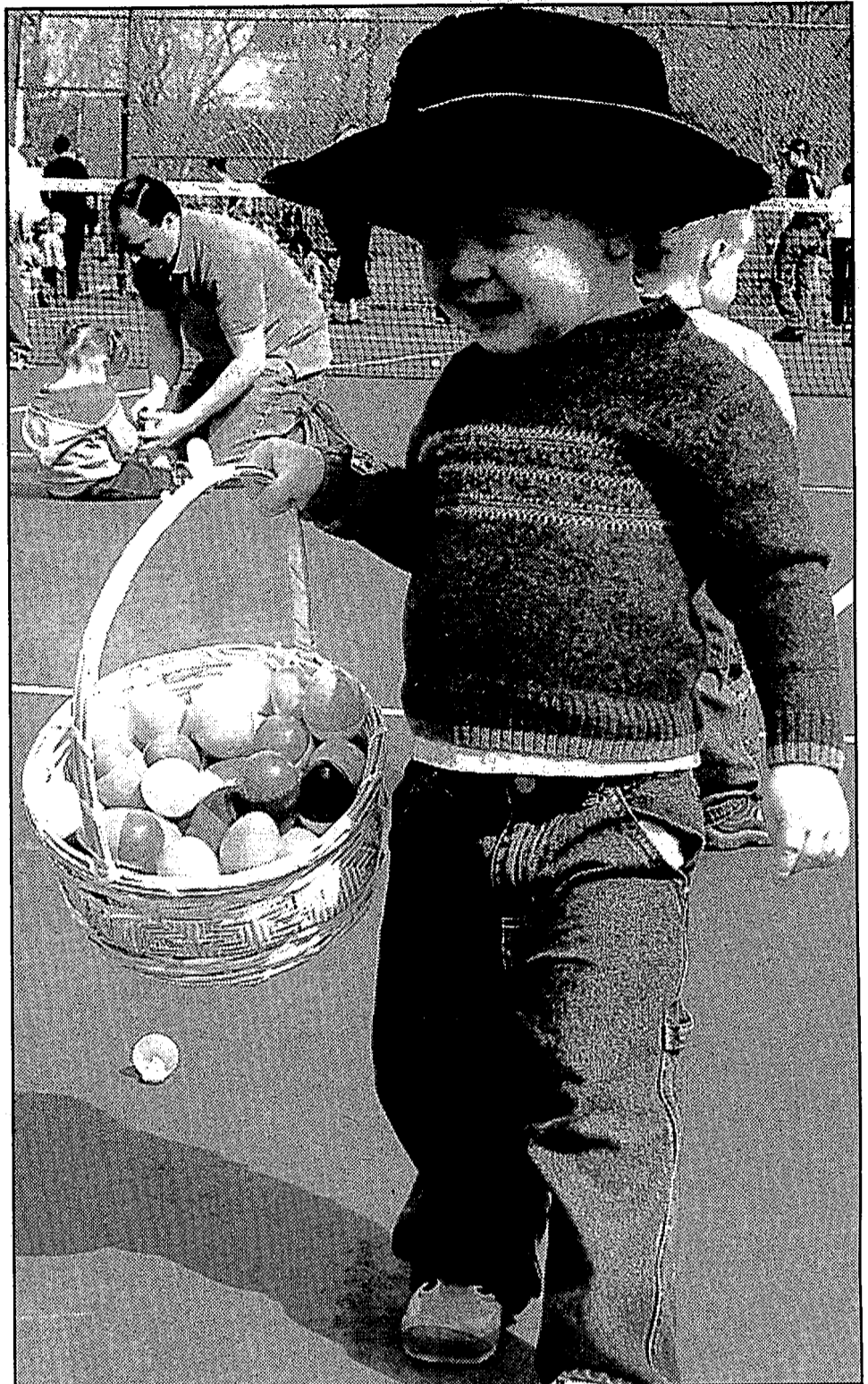
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Easter Egg Hunt at Millpond Park

Photos by Andrew Dupont



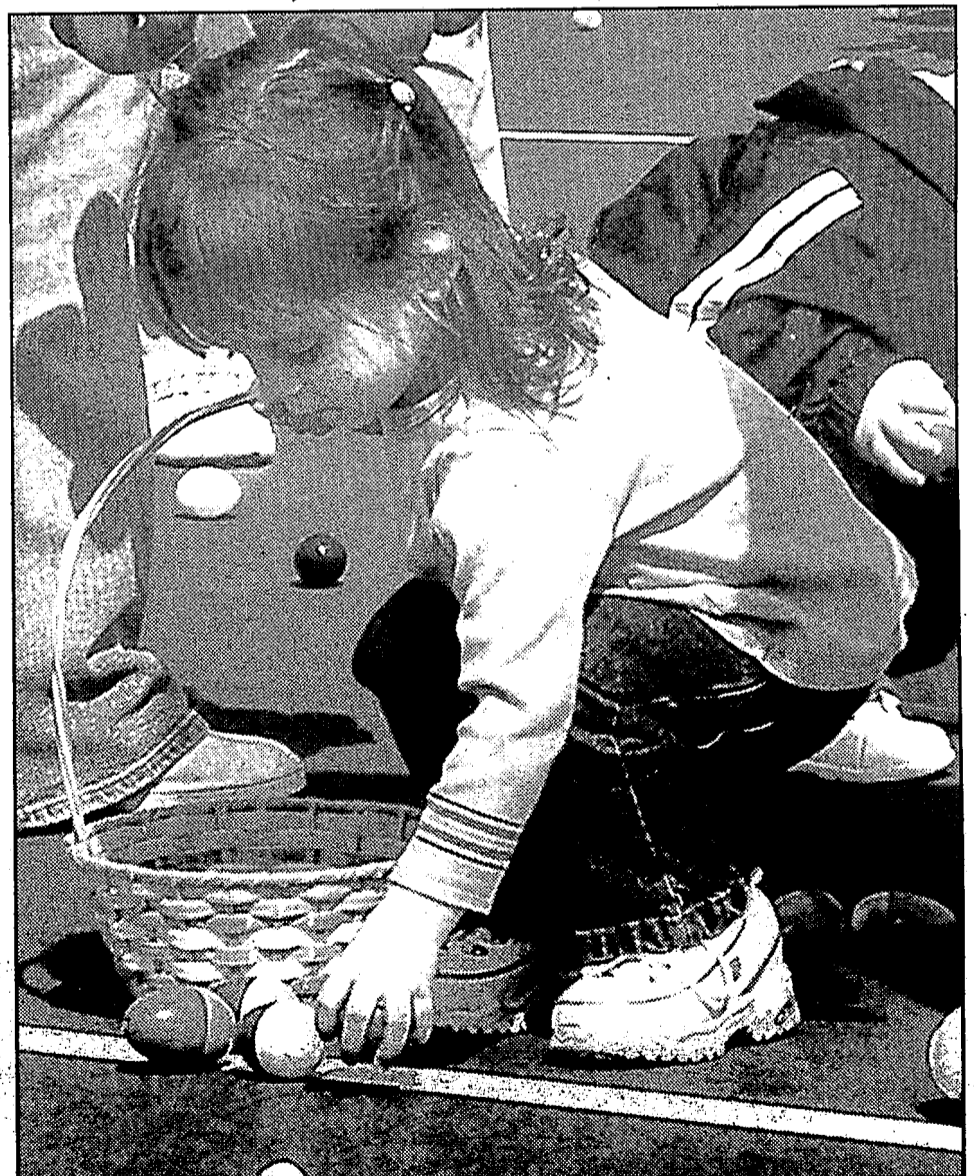
Serena Pascot became giddy playing with a rabbit at the petting farm after the egg hunt.



Wee doggy! Nate Bryde, 2, rustled up a whole lot of eggs.



Not a bad find for Chandler Fleming, 4, who separated from the group to find a whole area of uncollected eggs.



That one is mine! Kristina Humbarger reaches for another treasure.