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Happy New Year! Clarkston News

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2 Sections 40 pages 50¢

Tough choices

Budget issues hard to crack

BY PHIL CUSTODIO
Clarkston News Editor

When trustees, planners, and department heads meet for a budget workshop Jan. 9, they will have plenty to talk about.

The budget, as approved Dec. 5 by the Independence Township Board, is in deficit. The general fund is short \$27,355, and the other funds, except police and safety path, also post deficits.

"There will be a lot of things to consider," said Treasurer James Wenger. "I look forward to having the ability to talk about these issues and work things out - it won't be an easy session."

Factors entering into budget decisions include increasing health-care and retiree costs, parks and recreation, and possible reductions in tax money coming back from the state. A four-percent pay increase in the proposed contract for the township's union employees was a deal breaker for trustees earlier this month, so funding for a new contract will also be on their minds.

"This is a very tough time for the township as an entity - more so for the

Continued on page 10A



That's a wrap!

From left, Halley Sosnowski, Caylee Price, and Julie Small race to wrap a present during their classroom holiday party last Wednesday at Independence Elementary School. For more party pictures, see page 20A. Photo by Phil Custodio

A look to the past as we face the future

Budget trouble was the big issue for 2006. Both the schools and Independence Township turned to voters to help with money problems. Schools statewide put Proposal 5 on the ballot, which would have made up for lost state funding. The township put up for a vote a bond and millage that would have built a new senior center and help fund its Parks and Recreation Department. Both failed at the ballot box in November.

Take a look at that and other events of the past year in our review of 2006:

January 7

What if McLaren comes: Officials in Independence Township heard a presen-

tation for a large medical facility, including a hospital, made by representatives of McLaren Health Care Corporation to the Independence Township officials on Dec. 22. The \$500-600 million multi-phase plan, located on Bow Pointe Road east of Sashabaw Road and south of I-75, would create a virtual medical mall able to provide an array of medical services and include the four to five story hospital. In addition to the hospital, Orco Investments has put forward two distinct plans regarding a 70 plus acre piece of land located at the southwest corner of I-75 and Sashabaw Road. One includes a "big box" store, a hotel, an assisted living facility and other commercial buildings.

Help's here to get healthy: Independence Township Parks and Recreation's New Year's resolution this year is to help the community lose weight and enjoy the perks of being fit. The focus will take the form of the new health and fitness program Club Active and the Families Always Moving event series, designed to assist families in making healthier nutritional choices and increasing their activity and exercise levels.

Millstream: Celebrating 45 years of community entertainment, the story chronicled the Clarkston Village Players, who started with a small performance of "Two Blind Mice" at Clarkston High School in 1961. The group's history, as well as that

of Depot Theatre, were featured here.

January 11

First light shone on new millage: At the Jan. 9 Clarkston School Board meeting, the board moved one step closer to finalizing their proposal for a non-homestead tax. After lengthy discussion, the school board agreed to pursue approval for a non-homestead millage renewal in the district, estimated to be 19.2491 mills combined, for a period of 10 years. However, the district is only allowed to collect 18 mills annually by law. If approved, the millage would be in effect until 2015, but due to Headlee roll-back, the board could possibly seek ad-

See Year, page 4A

Millstream

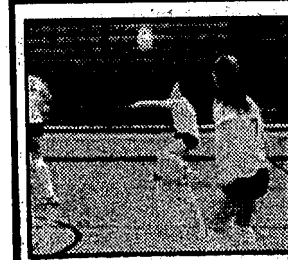
Cole Mitchell packs a punch

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Sports

How did the Wolves fare in OAA action?

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Independence Township Supervisor David Wagner and Clerk Shelagh Vanderveen examine a helmet-mounted thermal imager.

The Independence Township Board recently approved the purchase of four Bullard T4 thermal-imaging cameras for the fire department.

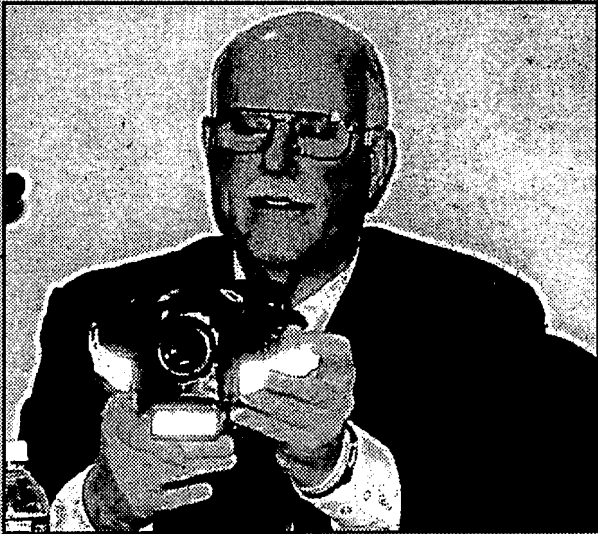
They will replace two older helmet-mounted systems. Firefighters brought samples of both to the Dec. 5 regular meeting for a hands-on demonstration.

Cost of the new cameras and accessories was \$52,945.

Mounting the camera on the helmet was more convenient, but the technology of the older system, purchased in 1998, is now obsolete, said Chief Steve Ronk.

New cameras, which are now all handheld, have better resolution and settings. They are used in structural fires, in which smoke reduces visibility to zero, to find victims and locate hot spots.

"These things give us our vision back," Ronk said. "They're an amazing tool."



Trustee Daniel Travis checks out a new Bullard T4 thermal imaging camera.

The Clarkston News

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5 S. Main Street Clarkston, MI 48346
Phone: 248-625-3370 • Fax: 248-625-0706

Email:
shermanpub@aol.com

Visit us on-line at:
www.clarkstonnews.com

Office Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mon. - Fri.

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Don Rush Assistant Publisher
Phil Custodio Editor
Andrew DuPont Reporter
Laura Colvin Reporter
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The Second Front

Briefly

Early deadline for New Year's

The Clarkston News office will be closed Monday, Jan. 1, for the New Year's holiday.

Advertising deadline is Friday, Dec. 29, at noon. Call 248-625-3370 for more information.

Planning, zoning appointments set

The Independence Township Board voted unanimously Dec. 5 to re-appoint Joan McCrary and Cheryl Karrick to the township Planning Commission for new terms through 2009. The board also appointed Thomas Andrews and Joseph Lawrence to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Lawrence is a new member of the ZBA. These terms also run through 2009.

Snowmobile class Jan. 8, 10

The Clarkston Health Center will be hosting a two-part "Snowmobile Safety Clinic" from 6-9:30 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 8 and Wednesday, Jan. 10. The cost of the program is \$10 per person. Pre-registration is requested.

This program is appropriate for all ages, but is required for individuals 12-16 years old who operate a snowmobile without an adult. Rules of the trail and other safety tips will be discussed.

Participants are asked to bring their social security card for identification. Individuals must attend both classes to receive their certification. Parents are encouraged to attend with their child(ren) at no additional charge.

To register and/or for more information, call 248-338-5389. This program, which kicks off International Snowmobile Safety Week, Jan. 14-20, is offered through the Community Education Department at FOH Medical Center.

The Clarkston Health Center is located at 5625 Water Tower Place just off Dixie Highway, north of White Lake Road, in the shadows of the blue water tower. Other services offered at Clarkston Health Center include a 24/7 emergency services, diagnostics, physical therapy, lab, pharmacy and other specialty physicians.

Got a story?
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Samuel Olivia-Perry was happy to see Santa so close to Christmas.

Visiting with Santa

Santa is usually extremely busy in the days before Christmas, but Clarkston Montessori owner Dee Dee Campbell has a connection.

Before heading back to the North Pole for last minute preparations, Santa paid a visit to the school and surprised students with some presents and candy. The students took turns visiting the man in red and thanked him for taking the time to visit.

Photos by
Andrew DuPont



Santa gave each student, including Laura Norrito, a gift bag filled with goodies.

Township prepares plan for public projects

BY PHIL CUSTODIO
Clarkston News Editor.

Just as Independence Township planners turn to the Master Plan when deciding development issue, they should turn to a Capital Improvement Plan when considering public projects.

That was the message given by planning consultant Richard Carlisle to the Township Board at its Dec. 19 meeting.

"It would serve as a baseline - a decision-making guide for the board," Carlisle said.

The Township Board authorized creation of the CIP in May, 2005. Since then, Carlisle and staff have been meeting with department heads and creating a list of projects, along with prioritization and cost. The lists have been assembled into a comprehensive, coordinated five-year plan for major improvements and purchases.

The CIP's starting point was the Vision 2020 Master Plan, which called for community facilities that "promote public health, safety, and welfare, and enrich the quality of life for township residents."

All the projects listed in the proposed plan would cost about \$38 million, and include a new township hall, senior center, parks and recreation projects, and

Independence Township capital facilities and equipment needs include the following, the total of which is \$37,655,000:

- General/Multi-function: Township hall, senior center, training facility - \$9 million;
- Parks and Recreation: Bay Court Lodge, school property renovation for soccer, purchase of 19 acres south of Clintonwood Park, and other improvements - \$6.2 million;
- Public works/water and sewer: up grades and renovations - \$4.3 million;
- General Technology: Geographic Information System - \$55,000;
- Library: New library and/or library addition, renovations - \$12.7 million;
- Fire Department/Public Safety: fire truck and ambulance replacements, replace Station 2, and for stations 4 and 5 - \$5.4 million.

Department of Public Works facilities. It is a list of priorities, not authorization to begin any work, Carlisle said.

"Just because something is listed as a priority doesn't mean we're going to do it tomorrow," he said. "(But) if there's no consistent plan, you'll never reach your objective."

The CIP would provide planners with a clearer view of their options. They would be able to identify projects with similar objectives and combine them, which would provide "more bang for the buck," Carlisle said.

The CIP would be a good planning tool, although budget deficits and the economy would make funding the projects difficult, said Trustee Daniel Travis.

"I applaud the idea of getting this

started," Travis said. "But with the economic constraints ... dreams will have to be delayed, I'm afraid."

Funding would mostly be pay-as-you-go from the General Fund, or borrowing through voter-approved bonds. A bond and millage proposal to build and fund a new senior center was rejected by voters this past November.

Other options are leasing or buying existing facilities, tax increases, and state and federal grants.

The next step is for a subcommittee of Township Board members, department heads, and other officials to meet in a study session and go over the list, Carlisle said.

For more information, call the township at 248-625-5111.

Year

continued from page 1A

ditional renewals in the next 2-4 years in order to keep the millage rate at or above 18 mills.

Keyholing discussion returns to Independence Twp: Residents looking to develop a parcel of land with lake access will soon have new regulations to follow if Independence Township Supervisor Dave Wagner gets his way. The purpose of the ordinance is to "provide regulations to facilitate local lake and water resource preservation, and to support the integrity of the lakes and bodies of water within the township, and recognize and promote the ecological balance of township waters by limiting incompatible land use and to limit artificial alteration to established shorelines."

Millstream: Who are the Pillars of Clarkston? *The Clarkston News* kicks off the series with three individuals nominated by our readers. Rev. Robert Walters: For the better part of three decades, members of Calvary Lutheran Evangelical Church in Independence Township could count on Rev. Bob Walters actively pursuing his mission and helping others chase theirs. Renee Wright: Whether at work or play, Renee Wright of Clarkston has the same idea in mind: helping students. Mike Spillum: "Other towns and cities should be so lucky as Clarkston to have a man who is so concerned about the community and believes in making it stronger for future generations," said Barbara Swan, a Waterford resident, formerly of Clarkston, in her nomination letter. "He may not be the mayor or the chief, but that's not as important as him just being a resident who cares."

Northern too much for Clarkston: Despite holding a 20-9 first quarter advantage, Clarkston's basketball team could not stave off sustained Pontiac Northern pressure on the road throughout the rest of their Jan. 6 meeting, losing 64-60.

Wrestling tips from the far east: The CHS wrestling team got a taste of international experience last week with a visit from 14 athletes from Japan. The Japanese National Wrestling Team visited Michigan for 12 days and stopped at four different high schools as part of a Japan-USA cultural exchange wrestling program.

January 18

Sending love across the world: Mrs. Sherwood's third-graders at Clarkston Elementary took a classroom lesson and turned it into a caring outreach to fellow Clarkstonite Josh Valenti, a 2003 graduate of Clarkston High School, who is currently stationed in South Korea on

military duty for the United States Air Force. The class worked on holiday cards, jokes, pictures and letters. When their work was done, the class packaged their crafts together and sent them to Valenti.

Independence proposed for senior center: A "divide and survive" strategy is on the table to secure funding for a new senior center in Independence Township, while at the same time making sure the area's Parks and Recreation department has enough money to stay afloat. According to a draft of the proposal, a millage to support the new senior center would fall in between .25-.5 mills

Fortinberry censured, court not all peachy: Just getting along seems to be on everyone's mind in the 52-2 District Court now that the Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission's case against Judge Dana Fortinberry is settled. Fortinberry was publicly censured by the Michigan Supreme Court on Jan. 12. The court issued an order agreeing with the terms of a settlement Fortinberry reached with the commission in November. "I continue to believe the most important part of this story is the ongoing relationship between Judge Fortinberry and Judge Kostin. The two judges are working efficiently and effectively together. think that's a credit to their professionalism," said Fortinberry's lawyer Thomas Cranmer.

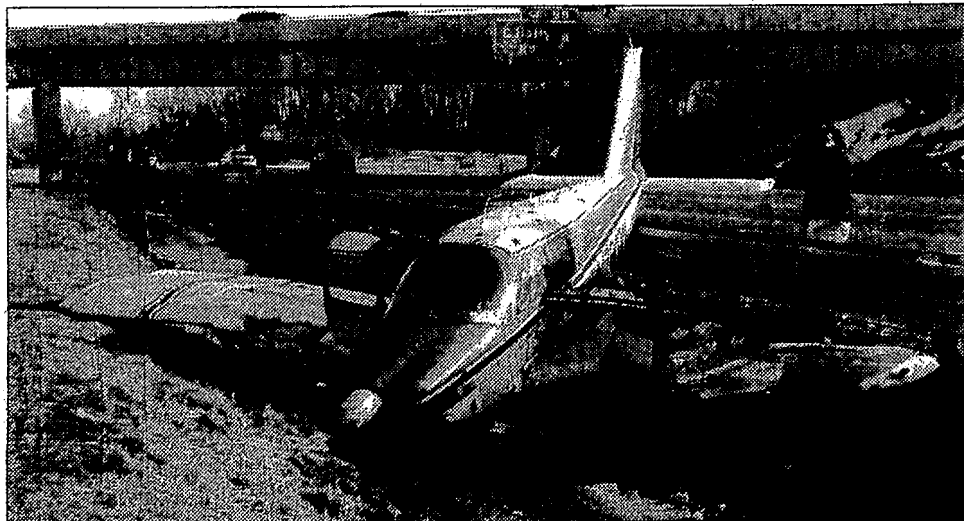
New senior center visualized: Independence Township Supervisor Dave Wagner released the first proposed renderings of the new township senior center - and the \$3 million, 14,000-square-foot structure pictured above is a far cry from original discussions of a combined senior center/ community building with a pole barn shape.

Millstream: Mike Witkowski's struggle with cancer made watching his 20-year-old daughter perform with the New York String Orchestra at Carnegie Hall that much sweeter. Christine, a 2003 graduate of Clarkston High School, was one of 61 musicians selected from conservatories, high schools and colleges to participate in the New York String Orchestra Seminar this December.

January 25

Senior thumbs up: look for August ballot proposals: The original goal was a new senior center for Independence Township. Now residents may need to decide whether or not they want an independently funded senior center program. The Independence Township Board of Trustees gave a thumbs up to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission to continue moving forward with a proposed senior center bond issue and millage for the August election.

See Year, page 5A



A small airplane crashed in the median between the north and southbound I-75 lanes near exit 98 to Holly Road at 4 p.m. on March 7. No one was injured in the plane or on the ground. File photo

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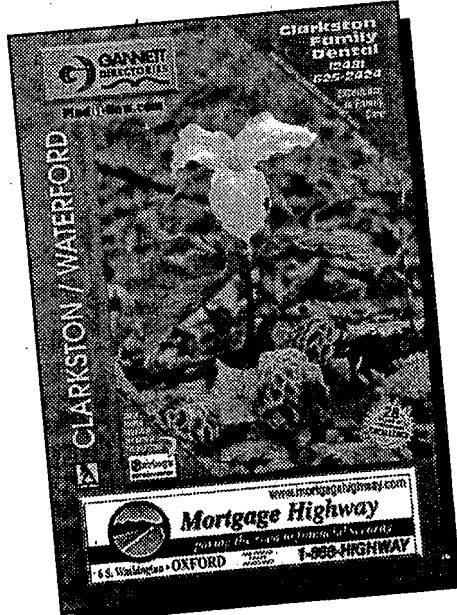
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Year

continued from page 4A

Independence dealing with numerous sex crimes: A string of cases involving internet predators and criminal sexual conduct is keeping police in Independence Township busy. At least six cases involving criminal sexual conduct and internet predators in or near Independence Township were under investigation, and several of the cases involve serious criminal sexual conduct towards children.

Millstream: Bryan Cornwall was featured for founding Advanced Pet Care on Sashabaw Road in 1992. "I followed my passion, and I would recommend that to anybody. I literally wake up in the morning and look forward to going to work," he said.

Grapplers prove mettle on the mats: When the wrestling season draws to a close, the Wolves wrestlers may be able to look back on the past week as a catalyst for whatever success they enjoyed down the road. Clarkston showed Lake Orion what they thought of the Dragons reign over the OAA Division I on the mats on Jan. 18, winning 30-25.

February 1

Second area bank robbed in four days: Two Clarkston area banks were robbed by different men handing notes to tellers demanding money and claiming they had a gun. At the TCF bank at 6430 Dixie Highway, Oakland County Sheriff Office deputies arrived to find employees and customers scooping up cash dropped in the parking lot by the robbery suspect.

Reprimanded by state: Dr. James O'Neill was fined \$2,500 for violating Public Health Code after a patient complaining of shortness of breath and chest pain visited him on three occasions in and around the start of 2000, and was sent home each time. Nine days after the third visit, the patient died. An autopsy revealed a heart attack as the cause of death.

Springfield Township Board discusses millages, budget: The Springfield Township Board held a special meeting on Jan. 24 to discuss potential 2006 budget amendments addressing revenue shortages and to look ahead at how to handle tough economic times, which could eventually mean higher taxes for residents.

Millstream: Chip Carlisle, of Independence Township, makes custom fish

ing lures in his home and sells them online to over 1,000 people. His clientele includes everyday fisherman, but reaches beyond the average weekend warriors to some big names in the fishing community.

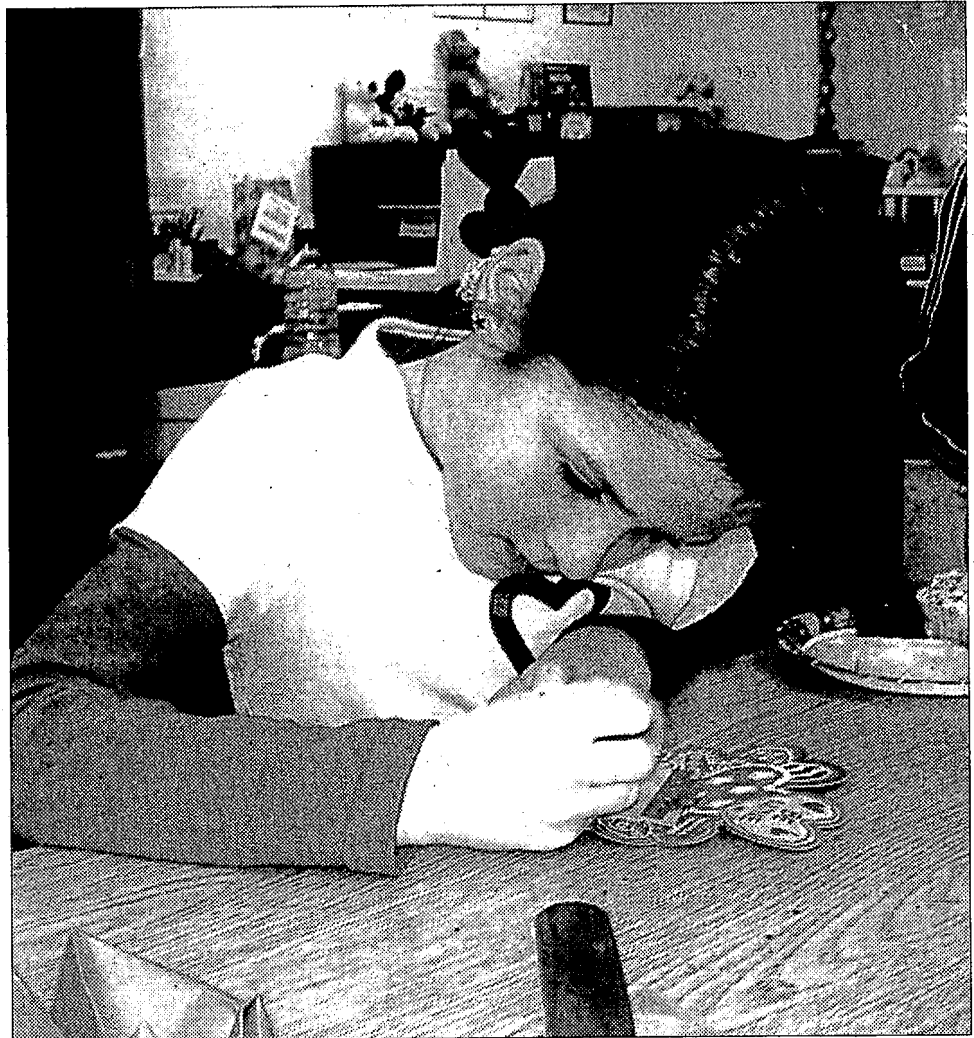
Wolves ride Colts into ground: In the OAA Division I Clarkston led the Jan. 27 contest at one point by a margin of 54-14 with 4:40 left in the fourth quarter. A late rally by Troy did little to swamp the joy of the Wolves home fans, but made the final score a more palatable 61-29. "We like to pounce on them early and really take their heart," said Clarkston senior Joe Rademacher.

Grapplers on the winning side of county line, eager for postseason trials: After reaffirming their reign over the Oakland County tournament with their fifth straight title on Dec. 17, Clarkston let their loyal subjects do the heavy lifting at the County Duals in Roseville on Jan. 28. The Wolves went 3-2 on the day, but were still on the victorious side as Lake Orion, West Bloomfield, Holly and Milford went a combined 17-9 in dual matches with Macomb County schools.

Leadership Clarkston to set goals in March: The formal "coming together" of Leadership Clarkston began almost a year ago - and now the group plans to set two to three new projects in motion. In February 2005, representatives from the City of the Village of Clarkston, Independence and Springfield townships, the Clarkston Area Chamber of Commerce and Clarkston Community Schools met to set a joint mission for the Clarkston area. Now, tentatively on March 1 at the Clarkston Schools administration building, the five entities will converge once more to finalize their goals for the next 18 months.

School petition moving forward: State public school funding may receive a major overhaul. The K-16 Coalition for Michigan's Future started a petition drive in Fall 2005 to place a proposal on the November 2006 ballot asking the state to increase in funding for K-16 public schools, community colleges and universities equal to the rate of inflation. "This legislation will provide a level of stability that has been missing since Proposal A passed," wrote Brooke Davis, history teacher and president of the Clarkston Education Association in an e-mail to The Clarkston News.

Millstream: Cyclist Mark Wolowiec was featured after he won "Rider of the Year" for 2005 while riding as a member of Clarkston's Flying Rhinos Cycling Club. The Rhinos are a cycling group



Pine Knob Elementary student Delaney Brown made a valentine on Feb. 14. File photo

based out of Kinetic Systems Bicycles in downtown Clarkston. The award, which Wolowiec also received in 1999, 2001 and 2002, capped off a successful 2005 year for the 49-year-old Southfield dentist, who also won four Michigan state cycling championships in the season for his age category.

Wolves enjoy respite from fellow OAA giants: The difference in competition level between the OAA's Divisions I and III was apparent as Clarkston soundly walloped Ferndale's basketball team 88-51 on Feb. 3. "This game gives us some confidence. (Ferndale) is young, we are supposed to beat them that way," Clarkston Coach Dan Fife said.

Chartrand's pair not enough for upset: While the Wolves are not ready to topple the best teams in the state they proved they can tangle with them as Clarkston's hockey team lost 4-2 on their home ice to No. 2 (Division I) Orchard

Lake St. Mary's on Feb. 4.

February 15

Millage language approved: At the Feb. 13 meeting, the board voted to approve the final wording for the May 2 election. Voters will decide whether or not to approve the district's request for 19.2491 mills of non-homestead tax for a period of 10 years. Supervisor Wagner looking to further widen Sashabaw Road: McLaren Healthcare Group, Palace Sports and Entertainment, Silverman Companies, Inc., Road Commission For Oakland County and County Executive L. Brooks Patterson are joining forces with Independence Township Supervisor Dave Wagner to request state and federal assistance for another Sashabaw Road widening project - at a cost of around \$13 million.

With open hearts: Support was in See Year, page 9A



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Dr. Kwartowitz



Dr. Downs

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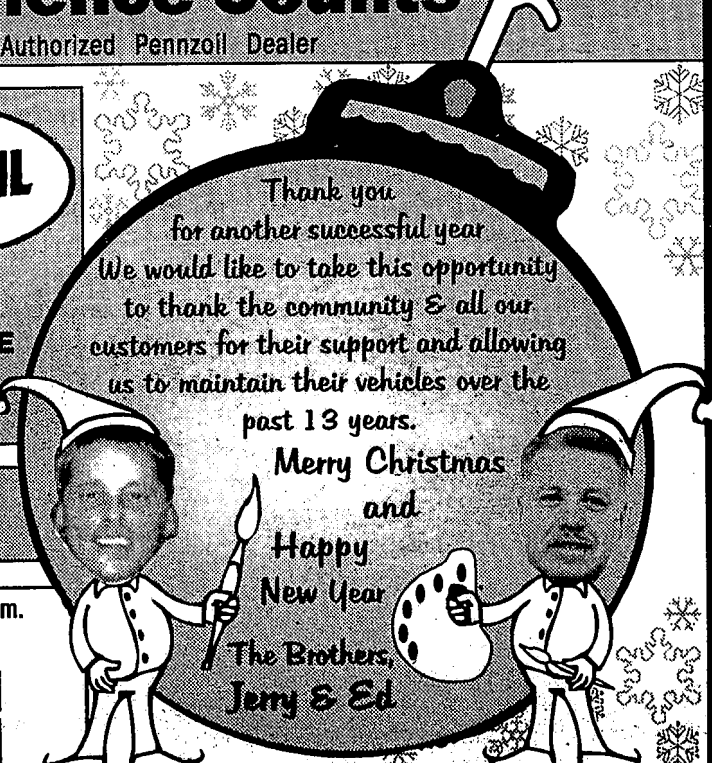
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Opinion

Predictions for the year 2007

Well, here we are. The last issue of 2006, my last soapbox for the year.

There's a ton to look back on, but that's what the "Year in Review" is for. Instead, let's look forward to 2007 and all the possibilities the new year holds.

Usually I only make predictions around election time, but this year I decided to make a few predictions for the new year instead of a resolution, and I'll share them with you.

Even though the Independence Township Senior Center millage proposal failed in November, the issue will likely come back into play over the next year.

Maybe township officials will figure out that renaming the project a "community center" which seniors will use will greatly increase the chances of people voting for it.

A new millage proposal? By this time next year, I'm sure it will be a discussion item.

Will ORCO and the idea of a big-box in Clarkston ever go away? Yeah, even the mighty Wal-Mart is beginning to falter from the negative attention they're getting on a regular basis. Check out the documentary "Wal-Mart: The high cost of low prices" for more details that you could want on the subject.

The point is Wal-Mart and other big-box stores are beginning to be branded as a kiss of death to local businesses, and Clarkston protects its own. ORCO will eventually get the hint that they're not wanted around here and this long strung-out battle will come to an exhaustive end.

Clarkston Schools started charging outside organizations for use of their facilities. It's all part of their effort to make up some of their expenses. Problem is, everyone else is having a difficult time making ends meet too.

Over the summer, I expect the schools to keep charging but lower their rates. The district's budget is looking gloomy so administrators will likely still want to try and earn some extra cash, but they'll probably have better luck attracting customers with lower prices.

Speaking of the school budget, the district has a lot to consider over the next few months, including employee contracts.

As bad as the financial situation may be, I still expect teachers to get a raise. I know the idea of raising salaries while simultaneously making millions in cuts seems contradictory, but there's a good purpose behind such actions.

Teachers get paid pretty well in Clarkston, but there are districts that pay better. If the district does not take care of their employees, they run the risk of losing them.

So even though raises might make it harder to balance the budget, the extra strain is worth it to maintain the classroom quality of the district.

So will any of this stuff happen?

I don't have a crystal ball obviously, but in the past I've been fairly accurate. In May, I correctly guessed the outcome of the school election and was only off by four percent — that's better than most news polls. In November, I correctly guessed all but one outcome of the election, so I have pretty good track record.

Only time will tell, of course, so here's to the new year and all the unpredictability that will come with it. Happy New Year!

Soapbox



Andrew DuPont

'Dear Editor' (letters from our readers)

Thanks for supporting local club

Dear Editor:

The Clarkston Farm and Garden Club would like to thank you for supporting our club this year by purchasing your wreaths and roping from us.

It's wonderful that our local businesses think of us when it is time to decorate for the holidays, and by doing so, the profits from the sale of the wreaths and roping and our Greens Market are put right back into our community.

We have so many wonderful projects that we do

throughout the year to enhance the look and feel of Clarkston that are totally funded by our fund-raising projects, this being the largest.

Again, thank you for allowing us to help you make your business more beautiful during this holiday season. Your support is truly appreciated.

Sue Maulbetsch
Wreaths and Roping Chair
Clarkston Farm and Garden Club

Guest editorial

Let's get serious about school pensions

On Election Day, voters in every Michigan county decisively rejected the union-driven education spending mandate known as Proposal 5, part of which would have transferred a portion of future, unsustainable school employee pension costs from local school districts to the state general fund.

But a problem the proposal sought to address still remains: underfunded school employee pensions. Future responsibility for the underfunded promises of the Michigan Public School Employee Retirement System will continue to burden school districts, and substantive pension reform is the only way to ensure school employees' and taxpayers' security.

MPSERS is a defined-benefit program, meaning the system promises members health insurance coverage and a set monthly pension payment upon their retirement. It is easy to get distracted by all the technical public finance and accounting language like "present value," "expected rates of return" and "life expectancies." But the concept is simple. If the fund's assets do not equal what it promises to pay, it is "underfunded" or, more accurately, overpromised.

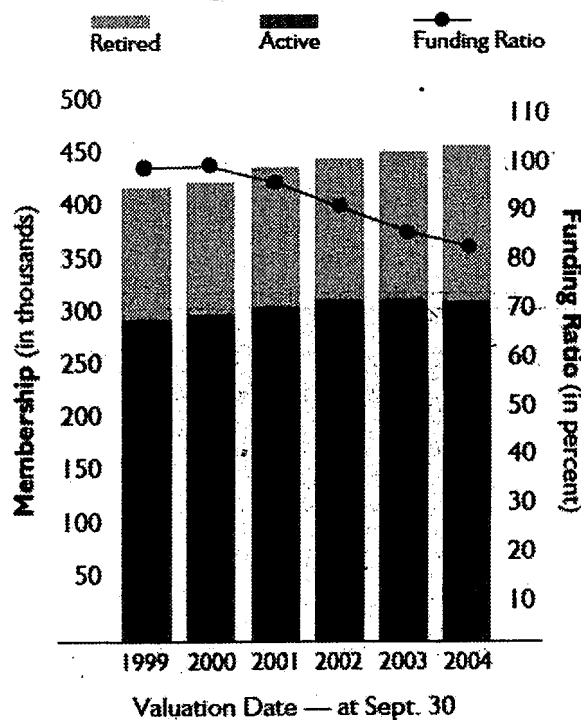
According to the latest MPSERS financial report, the program is 83.7 percent funded. That means that the pension fund's assets are only 83.7 percent of what actuaries have projected it will need to pay out to retired members, which amounts to a shortfall of about \$7.5 billion.

This fact would not be so onerous, if the ratio of assets to liabilities had been holding steady or increasing. But that isn't the case. Just six years ago, MPSERS was 99.3 percent funded. The slip is due to a variety of factors, including a stock market slump, increasing numbers of retirees and too few new participants replacing the retired ones.

Strangely, reform of MPSERS has been avoided by state legislators, even though increasing burdens are weighing on school boards and administrators. Consider the schools' perspective: This year, contributions to the pension system will likely cost school districts approximately \$1,040 per student, according to a recent estimate from Michigan's Senate Fiscal Agency. Moreover, MPSERS payments last year were estimated to have eaten up more than half of the increase in per-student state funding. The Senate Fiscal Agency projects that this year, MPSERS costs will consume almost 13 percent of districts' tax-funded income.

To deal with these rising costs, more than one-third of Michigan school districts are laudably pursuing better management strategies by competitively contracting noninstructional services. Others are seeking reasonably priced, quality health insurance benefits. But a sound

MPSERS Membership and Funding Ratios 1999-2004



Source: Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports of MPSERS, 2000-2005

solution for the over-promised system would offer even more relief to districts.

Raising taxes when the bills come due would be a questionable policy. It would mean that the majority of Michigan taxpayers, in addition to investing for their own retirement, would be on the hook for the unfunded liabilities. Other approaches would place more of the burden on the public employees themselves: raise the retirement age, close the system to new-hires or hike the contribution rate.

A better solution would be to emulate the private sector. Private-sector employers are realizing defined-benefit systems like MPSERS do not serve today's aging and mobile workforce. Instead, many employers are transitioning to defined-contribution plans such as 401(k)s. A defined-contribution plan could help to eliminate the program's underfunded promises and protect taxpayers from the program's debt.

Such a program can be designed in a way that protects inexperienced investors, keeps administrative costs low and allows participants to build the largest possible retirement nest egg while reducing risk as retirement age approaches. State officials could look

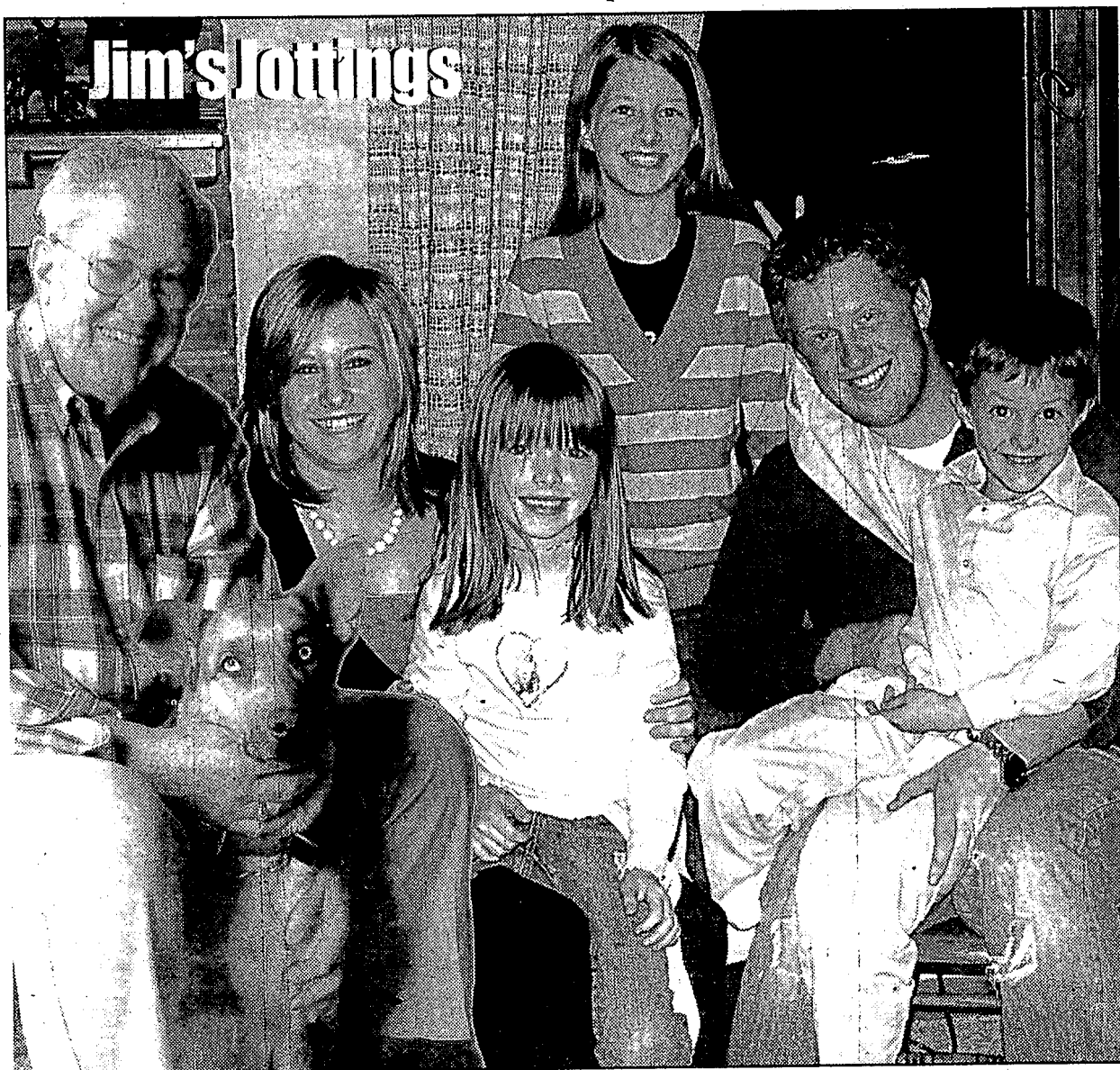
Please see Mackinac, continued on page 10A

Got something to say?

Write a letter to the editor!

shermanpub@aol.com, attn: Clarkston News

Jim's Jottings



Happy New Year! Longtime readers know during the holidays I like to show off the younguns -- our grandchildren. My, have they grown! The grandkids, from the left are: Karen Offer, Haley Speed, Savannah Speed, Dan Offer and Trevor Speed. All readers will notice something odd about ma' dog Shayna and myself... our picture was taken at a different time and "spliced" in on the computer. From all of us, to you, Happy Holidays.

New year means get a new name

This column originally ran Jan. 2003

It's the dawn of a new day in Casa de Rush.

We're shaking things up and gonna get rid of those midwinter blues. Yep, happy days are here again! We've come to the conclusion the Rush name is boring.

Come on, take a moment and think about it:

Don Rush.

That's only seven letters and only two syllables. And now that I think about it, it's no wonder I couldn't get a date in high school. Don Rush just doesn't pack a punch. All that big late 1970s and early 1980s hair topping those Clarkston High School girls' heads, and I had no dates. It must have been that the name Don Rush had no pizzazz. No Zip.

Well, we're changing that.

We're changing our names. I take that back, we have changed our names. Thanks to a handy guide e-mailed to my dear wife, Jen. Apparently, some dude named Dave Pilkey wrote a children's book called *Captain Underpants and the Perilous Plot of Professor Poopyants*.

In the book the evil Professor Poopyants forces everyone to assume new names, based on some sort of a diabolical name chart. The name chart uses certain letters from your real name to substitute your new name.

And, I think the names we, Don, Jen, Shamus and Sean Rush have been assigned actually tells a lot about our clan -- which is now Clan Chickenshorts. Chickenshorts is a very noble and proud name. As a matter of fact, Chickenshorts have sat in the White House as President of the United States, not just once, but twice. Clan Bush is Clan Chickenshorts, too.

I'm thinking about loading up the family into the old jalopy and giving cousin George (Goober), Jr., a visit from his po' relations from the north. We



don
rush
don't rush me

Chickenshorts are kindly bunch, so I don't think he'll mind much.

To determine our new first names, we had to use the third letter of our given names. So, with the name Don (and Jen), the third letter is "N." The handy Poopyants Chart says those who have "N" as the third letter of their first name will now be called Zippy. So, Jen and I are now Zippy and Zippy Chickenshorts.

Shamus and Sean, based on the third letter plan, are both Poopsie. I predict things are going to get a little confusing around Chez Chickenshorts.

I had some fun with this chart at work. For example, Sherman Publications, Inc.'s Jim Sherman has a new name. He is now: Pinky Wafflebuns.

And, since I'm picking on the company owners:

... Luan Offer is now: Poopsie Barftush.

... Susan Speed is now: Snotty Hamstertush.

Ah... at a wonderful world we live in.

■ Farah Fawcett is now: Loopy Appleface (Loopy, ain't that the truth?)

■ Ronald Reagan is now: Zippy Girdlepants.

■ Bill Clinton and Hill Clinton are now: Boobie and Boobie Liverchunks.

■ Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein: is Gidget Chickenfanny.

■ Osahma bin Laden is: Poopsie bin Applecootie.

■ Political columnist Helen Thomas is: Boobie Waffletushie.

■ And, political commentator Rush Limbaugh is: Snotty Cootiemouth (some would say this is true.)

* * *

I don't know about you, but I think Captain Underpants writer Dave Pilkey has come up with something here. Since the chart is too long to write here, if you want to find out what your new name is, based on the evil Professor Poopyant's diabolical plan, send me your e-mail address and I'll shoot it out to you. May your New Year be loving, healthy, prosperous and fun.

E-mail: Zippy Chickenshorts at: dontrushmedon@charter.net

A Look Back

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

15 years ago - 1991

"Drinking and driving: better think twice in Michigan, Independence" The Independence Township Board voted to amend its drunken driving ordinance to align it with new state guidelines. The new ordinance sets increasingly severe punishments for repeat drunk-driving arrests. It also set penalties for refusing to take a breath test.

"Shoplifting up and down among area merchants" The sheriff's department reported fewer shoplifting incidents in downtown Clarkston but it was still a problem for some area businesses. A local judge said the economic recession has a general effect on crime, causing a ripple effect that can increase shoplifting.

"Gingerbread combines ages, programs in Clarkston area" Students at the Oakland Technical Center - Northwest, winners of a state gingerbread house contest, displayed their work for local children at their open house.

"Skinheads' spur dangerous weapon ordinance" The Independence Township Board approved first reading of an ordinance amendment banning concealed weapons. The ban, which was requested by the Sheriff's Department, would include guns, knife blades longer than three inches, throwing stars, clubs, and nunchaku. A violation would be considered a misdemeanor. Police were concerned with the rising number of "skinheads," youth who would shave their heads and follow neo-Nazi doctrines, in the area.

25 years ago - 1981

"Man saves Wints from fiery death" Passing motorists noticed a fire coming from Lewis E. Wint funeral home on Main Street, contacted the fire department, and pounded on the door until the Wint family members inside awoke. Leon and Barbara Blanchura was credited by Fire Chief Frank Ronk with saving the Wints' lives.

"Rose thinks township should review 'cityhood'" Independence Township Clerk Christopher Rose said trustees should consider a city charter for the township. This would help to preserve the township's borders and allow the hiring of a superintendent.

50 years ago - 1956

"Lighting displays judged this week" Judging begins for the Christmas Lighting Contest. The three best homes would be entered in the General Electric \$5,000 national contest.

"MSU aids Hungarian students" Ten scholarships were created by Michigan State University for students fleeing the Communist terror in Hungary.

"Drive safely; be alive in '57" Michigan State Police backed by 121 soldiers of the National Guard were to step up traffic law enforcement over the holidays.



NEW BABY **1ST BABY OF 2007 CONTEST!** **2007**

RULES:

1. The winning baby must be officially born on or after January 1, 2007, to parents who are residents of the Clarkston Village, Independence Twp. or Springfield Twp. (Davisburg) or outside these governmental boundaries the Clarkston School District.
2. From qualifying entries received, the baby with earliest birth date and time will be declared the winner.
3. An entry must include a written statement from the family doctor, giving exact time, day, date and place of baby's birth. Include the baby's name, sex, weight, plus the parents' name, address and daytime telephone number.
4. Entries must be mailed or delivered to The Clarkston News by January 8, 2007. Mail to 5 S. Main St., Clarkston, MI 48346 or drop off at our office.

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Police and Fire

Independence Township

Fri., Dec. 15 Deputies responded to the intersection of Dixie Highway and White Lake Road for an accident involving a Dodge Neon car and a semi truck. The driver of the Neon, a 17-year-old Commerce resident, died at the scene. The driver of the truck was transported to the hospital with minor injuries. The preliminary investigation points toward the driver of the Neon pulling out in front of the semi-truck after failing to stop for a flashing red light. Alcohol does not appear to be a factor in the accident.

Tues., Dec. 19 A Clarkston man reported that his house was egged. The incident is under investigation.

Tues., Dec. 19 A Clarkston man called police to report an injured deer at his house. The responding deputy shot the animal with his duty pistol. The resident was issued a DNR kill permit for the deer.

Tues., Dec. 19 A Clarkston man reported a stolen car stereo and speakers.

Tues., Dec. 19 An Independence Township man reported a stolen flashlight and garage-door opener from his vehicle. The door was not locked.

Tues., Dec. 19 Sheriff's deputies



Independence Township firefighters responded to a report of a fire Dec. 6 in Clarkston. There were no injuries. Photo by Phil Custodio

responded to a breaking and entering call at a restaurant on Sashabaw. The store manager reported that \$1,000 in computer equipment and liquor was stolen. Doors were reportedly locked and unforced. The investigation is continuing.

Thurs., Dec. 21 An Ortonville woman at an Independence Township sports club reported that a window on her vehicle was broken and her purse

stolen. She reported her credit card stolen. Sheriff's deputies investigated, tracking illegal purchases to a video store and gas station. Officers are examining video surveillance tapes taken of the suspect.

Thurs., Dec. 21 Officers responded to a report of a woman screaming. A Clarkston woman was having an argument with her daughter.

Year

continued from page 5A

full force for Lighthouse Emergency Services on Feb. 9 as figureheads and pillars of the Clarkston Community joined together for the third annual "Open Your Heart to Lighthouse" event. The festivities took place in the home of Jerry and Carolyn Hemphill, who co-chaired the event with Tom and Tami Lowrie. The event raised approximately \$44,000 for Lighthouse.

Millstream: This past fall, Major Damon Shields of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office received a yellow brick after graduating with 246 other police officers as part of the FBI National Academy's 223rd session. The brick now proudly hangs in Shield's office as part of the famed "Yellow Brick Road" event at the academy. The 10-week FBI fitness challenge (held one day a week) combined a 3.1 mile run and three mile obstacle course testing the physical aptitudes of the officers. According to Shields, each week the training intensified and focused on a set of skills needed to complete the course on the final training day.

Wolves scratch 'Win league title' off to-do list: The adage goes "Make new friend but keep the old ones, some are silver and the rest are gold." Clarkston's wrestling team got back in touch with one of their long-time friends of the golden variety on Feb. 10 as they reclaimed the OAA I League crown from Lake Orion.

Please see Year, page 10A

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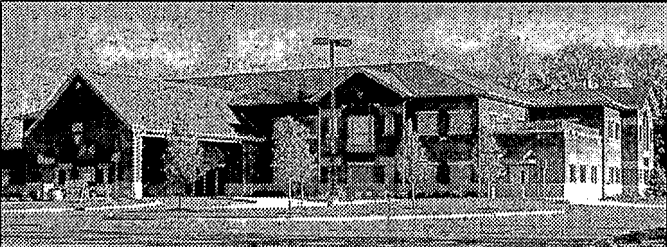
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Try to cut down on unnecessary medication

By Ernie Harwell



There's no question about it. Everywhere you turn these days there's another advertisement for this or that new pill or over-the-counter medicine. And the medicine aisle in the local drug store contains tens of dozens of medicines just waiting to overwhelm the next unsuspecting shopper.

Everyone needs to take over-the-counter medications once in awhile. But I think the average person could probably cut down on the need for these things with a little effort.

For example, if you tend to get heartburn, you can take a good look at the foods you're putting into your body. It's possible that a better diet can help you reduce your reliance on those antacids. Also, if you have allergies, you might want to talk to your doctor about lifestyle changes you can make. Who knows? You might be able to avoid taking another allergy pill.

We all want to feel good all the time. To me, it just makes sense to try to do it "au naturel" whenever we can.

And please remember to take care of your health before it's longgggg 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.

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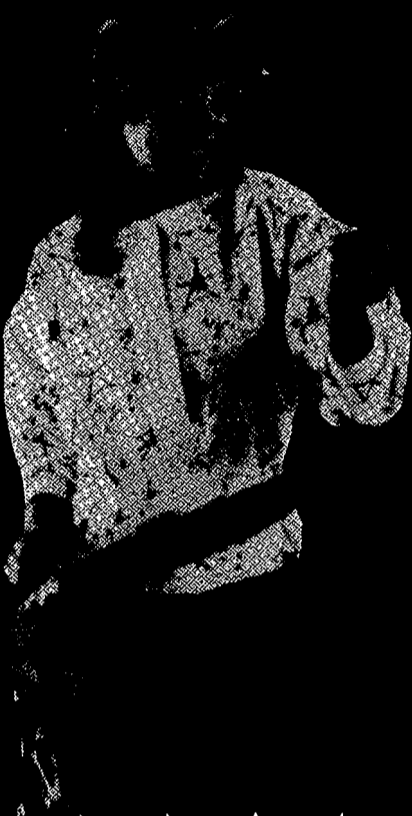
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Year

continued from page 10A

Millstream: Featured Frank "Tink" Ronk, who ran Ronk's Barbershop, became the first full-time firefighter in the township and help start what evolved into today's sophisticated Independence Fire Department (now led by his son Fire Chief Steve Ronk) and served as township supervisor.

Wolves on their own from here on out: Clarkston's team-wrestling season ended Feb. 15 as No.3 ranked Davison beat the Wolves 41-24. The wrestling season continues though, as nine Clarkston warriors, qualified for individual regionals with top-four finishes at the individual districts on Feb. 18.

Chiefs close door on Clarkston's league title hopes: After nearly two seasons of home victories, the Clarkston basketball faithful stood shocked as Pontiac Central gutted out a 62-54 win over the Wolves on Feb. 16. With last week's action, Clarkston's league record stands at 5-4, leaving them on the outside look-

ing in on the race for the OAA I title.

March 1

Township OKs raises: With little discussion and only one dissenting voice, the Independence Township Board of Trustees voted 5-1 on Feb. 21 to increase the elected officials salaries by three percent, or a combined total of \$4,697.42, for 2006. The percentage increase came by recommendation from Supervisor Dave Wagner

Independence Township approves fire agreement: Independence Township trustees voted unanimously to pass the three-year fire service agreement. The Clarkston City Council approved the fire agreement at their Jan. 9 meeting; however, several council members were unhappy with the 10 percent administration charges

Independence Twp. welcomes new library director: Julie Meredith first began working in the Independence Township Library as a volunteer at the age of 12. Now, 18 years later, she is returning as Independence Township's new library director. "I want resi-

dents to know how passionate I am about Independence Township Library," said Meredith. "Independence Township Library is the reason I am a librarian."

Millstream: The Michigan Community Service Commission awarded Chris Turner with the 2006 Outstanding Service-Learning Administrator Award for Independence Elementary's Serving Our Community Kids Style (SOCKS) program, which incorporates community service into the students' curriculum.

Let's get it started: After Clarkston schooled West Bloomfield on the finer points of basketball in an 83-40 home win on Feb. 7, Clarkston Coach Dan Fife knew the Lakers would be looking forward to his team's visit on Feb. 24. The Lakers and their fans might still have some residual bitterness though, as Clarkston escaped with a 65-56 win.

Girls ski team sets new benchmark: The Clarkston girls ski team blazed a new trail for "flatland" schools across the southern portion of the mitten as they skied their way to second place at the MHSAA state finals at Boyne Highlands on Feb. 27. Dating back to 1975, no girls team from below the thumb has finished higher than third place at the state meet. The Wolves finished third at the 2005 state finals.

March 3

Plane crashes on I-75 median: For a brief moment on March 7, I-75 became a runway as an airplane crash landed in the median near East Holly Road in Springfield Township. At approximately 4:20 p.m., the privately owned single-engine Piper aircraft was forced to land following engine problems. The 45-year old pilot and a 37-year-old passenger, both from Coldwater, Ohio walked away from the crash nearly unscathed.

Two projects get 'go ahead' from Leadership Clarkston: Two joint projects - one old, one new - are the result of a year of work by the five entities involved with Leadership Clarkston. The existing project will focus on creating a uniform method of scheduling facilities and events between Clarkston Schools, Clarkston Schools Community Education, and Independence and Springfield townships parks and recreation departments. The new project will create unified public access stations through Comcast so that broadcasts are consistent across the area.

Millstream: Some know Marc Cooper as a Springfield Township trustee. Others remember him as the former president of the Clarkston Chamber of Commerce or the owner of The Impressive Type, LLC. Still others know him as dad, grandpa or a man of strong faith. Even more know Cooper for his devotion to friends, family and the community he calls home.

Rademacher's hustle and flow beats back Captains: Though they defeated Waterford Kettering 65-49 in the opening round of district play on March 6, not many smiles graced the faces of Clarkston's basketball team as they emerged from the locker room.

"If we keep playing like that the season will be over," Clarkston Coach Dan Fife said.

March 15

See Year, page 15A

William Beaumont Hospital Welcomes



Dr. Elissa B. Gartenberg

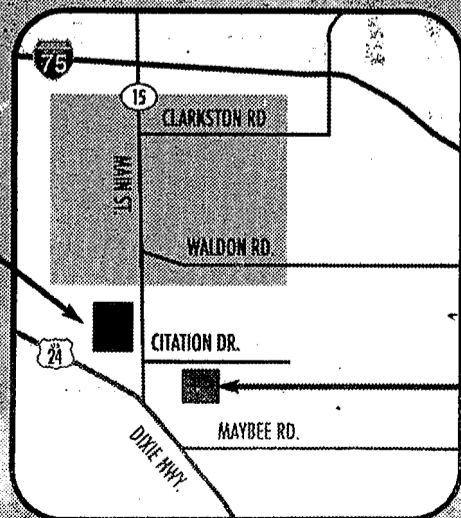
in joining Beaumont-affiliated Clarkston Lakes Family Medicine

Dr. Gartenberg completed her residency in Family Medicine at the prestigious Mayo Clinic. She is a graduate of both the University of Michigan and Michigan State College of Osteopathic Medicine and is a Beaumont-employed medical staff member.

Dr. Gartenberg offers a holistic and personalized approach to caring for her patients including a special interest in preventative medicine. She provides medical care for the entire family, including newborns and senior citizens.

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December 31

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Year

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Home intruder sentenced: A man who entered a Clarkston home and attacked a woman in December plead no contest to one count of second degree home invasion on Feb. 16. Rogelio Lopez Medina, 18, was sentenced to one year in jail with credit for 76 days served in 6th Circuit Court before Judge Steven Andrews. He was also charged with court fees and fines. The charge stemmed from an incident on Dec. 21 when a Clarkston resident found Medina in her home on E. Washington Street.

Millstream: A camera crew from MTV had arrived at Lorenzo's Italian cuisine on Dixie Highway to film one of eight possible episodes for a series called "Tiara Girls" that would chronicle the daily lives of teenagers preparing for beauty pageants. The star? Katarina Rea of Clarkston.

Whose house? United as they are under a single mascot, Clarkston's basketball team exacted a parcel of revenge for their football playing brethren, beating Lake Orion 56-50 to win the district title on March 10. This past fall the Dragons dispensed with the Wolves to capture a district championship on the gridiron. On the hard court though, Clarkston weathered their upstart neighbors best efforts to emerge with their 15th district crown in the past 16 years.

March 22

Former library director sues twp.: Independence Township officials will give depositions this April in a new court case - this past January, former township library director Molly Lynch filed a civil suit for wrongful discharge or firing, who is seeking damages for lost wages and benefits due to her dismissal. The civil suit is based upon a contract she had with the township which stated she could not be fired without just cause. "Being fired came as a surprise to me," said Lynch. "I don't think they had any reason to fire me. I was there for 14½ years. I did a lot for this township."

Increased sewage rates on horizon in Clarkston: The Clarkston City Council received a memo from Independence Township DPW Director Linda Richardson outlining a preliminary updated sewer agreement. The update would increase the amount city residents pay the township per quarter per residential equivalent unit by approximately \$15.40 at the end of a three-year period. Figures from the memo show that while the city paid the township \$8,814 per year from 1981-2005, after the increases the city would pay \$38,127 per year by 2008.

Clarkston Watershed Group earns \$750 grant for Depot Park: The Clarkston Watershed group recently received a \$750 grant from the Oakland Native Partnership Initiative. The grant is meant to pay for native plantings and other measures to prevent run off as well as promote public awareness about taking care of water and shorelines. The group hopes Depot Park will serve as an example to the whole community about protecting water resources.

Millstream: As the co-owner of Kinetic Systems bicycle shop in downtown Clarkston, Jeff Noftz's finds time to fit coaching cycling, teaching tai chi and fitting cyclists at the bike shop into his weekly routine.

Familiarity breeds championships: The Wolves beat Macomb Dakota 64-59 to win the regional championship on March 17 on their home floor. Much to the delight of their loyal fans who packed the stands, Clarkston netted the basketball program its fourth straight regional title, the seventh of Coach Dan Fife's career. "Our crowd was great. This is Clarkston. Clarkston has always been a great athletic community. We've always



Assistant Fire Chief Bob Elizondo of the Independence Township Fire Department tends to a controlled burn on Feb. 10 of a building on property on Dixie Highway just south of I-75, which the fire department used for training. File photo.

had great support," he said during the afterglow of the regional victory.

Wolves playoff run over: Clarkston's climb to the top of the state playoff ladder was halted by Saginaw Arthur Hill on March 21. The Lumberjacks defeated the Wolves 65-58 at Saginaw Valley State University. "We can look back and say we were one of the final eight in the state this year, and that's a great accomplishment," Clarkston Coach Dan Fife said.

March 29

MEAP results show consistency for district: Despite some changes to the testing schedule and the addition of the third grade, results for MEAP show Clarkston schools remain consistently at or above state expectations and are highly placed in Oakland County. "We consistently do well. We're at or exceed the state and generally better than Oakland County," Staci Puzio, district testing supervisor for Clarkston Schools said.

Millstream: While the food was sumptuous, the dancing spirited and the company sublime, the true success of the Clarkston Optimist Club's 20th anniversary gala on March 25 was evidenced by the \$30,000 or so raised for the group's future endeavors.

Wolves lift their way to 3rd in state: For the second year in a row the Clarkston powerlifters took third place at the state meet on March 18 in Goodrich. "We've built a reputation, what we've established will carry over to next season," Clarkston Coach Chad Looper said.

Boys track off and running: With the start of the track regular season just around the corner, Clarkston Coach Walt Winiemko took a selection of his 70 plus runners to the Saginaw Valley Indoor Meet on March 24. The Wolves ended up in seventh place out of 12 teams on the day.

April 5

Money: Despite an increase in yearly revenue, the Clarkston School district expected to post the first deficit budget in five years. The district expected to collect \$74.9 million in general fund revenue for the 2005-06 fiscal year - up more than \$5 million from the previous year. Anita Banach, director of marketing and communications, said the significant increase in expenditures is largely due to the operation costs of new facilities and rising transportation costs.

Clarkston Church begins search for new home: After a deal with the Waterford

Township Board they thought was complete fell through, the Divine Peace Metropolitan Community Church looks for a home of their own. Divine Peace, located at 5311 Sunnyside Drive in Independence Township, had until May 22 to find a new home.

Millstream: Little changes make a world of difference - Clarkston resident Osa Jackson Shulte, PhD, PT, GCFP/AT, was featured for her work with the Feldenkrais Method of physical therapy.

April 12

Results are in: On March 22, *The Clarkston News* began a survey asking readers their opinions on various aspects of the Clarkston School District and the upcoming school millage ballot. After two and a half weeks of collection, the final numbers are available and 52 surveys were submitted. Eleven were delivered by hand and 41 were entered through our Web site, www.clarkstonnews.com. Of the 52 surveys, only one question received a consistent reply: Clarkston Schools does a good job of educating students.

Sweet revenge: During the third annual students versus staff volleyball tournament fund-raiser for the Jimmy V Foundation for Cancer Research, the student emerged victorious. Known as Team Sapphire, the CHS sophomores fought past teams of older students and teachers to earn a championship victory over the undefeated staff team Orange Crush.

Attempted robbery at Sashabaw Bank: On the evening of April 10, a man attempting to rob an Independence Township bank by giving a teller a note, fled without any money before police arrived.

Millstream: *Clarkston News* Reporter James Martinez sat down for a one-on-one interview with Independence Township resident and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.

April 19

In perspective: Following an examination to employees salaries in the Clarkston School District, *Clarkston News* Reporter Andrew DuPont compared those salaries to those in other districts in Oakland County, on a state level and in comparison to districts of similar size. The results showed that Clarkston School employees makes more than the state average and similarly sized districts, but were

See Year, page 19A

Clarkston News Sports

Not for the birds

Wolves knock off Blue Jays

BY PAUL KAMPE
Clarkston News Staff Writer

Looking to rebound from their first loss in nearly 20 years to conference foe Lake Orion, the Clarkston Wolves played a solid game against Southfield on Dec. 19.

In front of a home crowd, the Wolves regained their footing in a 79-66 win over the Blue Jays from OAA II to improve their record to 3-1 for the season. With the loss, Southfield goes to 0-2.

Oliver Kupe, playing in his second game after returning from a national soccer program, led all scorers with 23 points. Dan Owens returned closer to his 2005-'06 average with 16 points, after nearing 30 in two games this season. Andy Lyons had 14 and Bren

Begquist had nine points for Clarkston.

The Wolves' 10-point halftime lead, 35-25, was enough, although the Blue Jays pulled within five points late in the game.

"We played better, but we're still trying to find our team and establish (its) character," Clarkston Coach Dan Fife said.

"We're looking forward to the holidays so we can address some of the things we need to work on."

Southfield Coach Gary Teasley said he switched his team's game-plan late in the contest, but that move proved fruitless for his young team.

"We were down five points within the last couple minutes in the game. We changed up our defense, which caused some difficulty and we had some lapses," Teasley said.

"In transition, they (Clarkston) got some easy lay-ups and we ended up trading baskets instead of cutting down that deficit and closing it out."

The Southfield players are working on getting

themselves onto the same page and will keep working to turn close losses into actual victories, Teasley said.

"We're not satisfied with moral victories at all. They know it; I know it and our program is committed to that. The kids don't feel intimidated by that pressure, that challenge is going to make the best of them," he said.

Sophomore guard Tim Keith led the Blue Jays with 18 points in his first varsity game.

"He's broken into the lineup with juniors and seniors. He's very competitive and he has basketball I.Q."

Jonathan Lamb had 14 points and six rebounds, Austin Calhoun had 13 points and six rebounds and Domonique Barns had 11 points.

Ty Taylor and Kevin Badgley had six and seven points respectively for the Wolves off the bench.

Clarkston will take the next week off. The Wolves make their return on Jan. 5 versus the defending OAA champions, Pontiac Central, at 7 p.m. at Pontiac.

Aiming at Ainsworth

BY PAUL KAMPE
Clarkston News Staff Writer

It's always important to maintain a high-level of play, and the Clarkston Wolves are doing that so far this season.

Clarkston defeated Carman Ainsworth 76-61 on the road Dec. 12, to improve to 2-0.

Dan Owens continued his scoring binge, dropping 28 in the win. Bren Bergquist, also

experiencing an early-season scoring surge, had 19 points and Andy Lyons scored 13 points for the Wolves. Clarkston increased its 10-point lead after the first quarter to 12 points at the half, leading 39-27.

The Wolves led by 20 points at the end of the third quarter.

"We shot the ball very well as a team, (but) we didn't rebound particularly well," Clarkston Coach Dan Fife said.

"It was a good environment for us, playing away in someone else's gym in a very competitive game, and we responded."

The Wolves seemed to recover from their first game jitters at a season-opening victory over Flint Northern on Dec. 8.

"We played better and took care of the ball better," Fife said.

"I was happy with the response from the first game to the second game. I thought we

improved," he added.

Carman Ainsworth Coach Rory Mattar said his team played well, but not well enough to take the win.

"We played pretty well, but not very smart. We made poor decisions offensively," he said.

"Clarkston played much more physical and our guys didn't respond to that."

Mattar said his team was too impatient in its decision making.

"We took the first shot we got and we weren't patient on

the offensive end," Mattar said.

The Cavaliers, of the Big-Nine Conference, suffered with the loss of point guard John Lee, who sat much of the first and second quarters of the game while in foul trouble.

"He's our main player, we struggle without him," Mattar said.

Lee did score 12 points, as did Reggie Stallings for the Cavaliers. Clarkston will take part in a basketball showcase at Flint Central on Dec. 21.

Athlete of the week Sinclair to turn Panther next season

BY PAUL KAMPE
Clarkston News Staff Writer

A prowler in the backfield, Clarkston's Jordan Sinclair is set to become a panther when she travels to Grand Rapids to become part of Davenport University's womens soccer program.

Sinclair signed with the school while on a visit to the campus on Nov. 17.

The Panthers are looking to improve upon a 4-11 overall and 3-9 record in the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Panthers Coach Wayne Vandemerwe said Sinclair's tenacity, speed and work ethic will be a big bonus to the team.

"She'll bring leadership in the back," Vandemerwe said.

"On defense, she's a good leader verbally," he said.

"It's hard to find players who will control the

game verbally from the back."

Sinclair should be able to influence her new teammates.

"She's a very good team player who makes everyone around her better."

Clarkston girls soccer coach Sarah Smith has been coaching Sinclair for two years and explained that Sinclair has a great grasp for the game.

"She has a lot of poise and control as a sweeper," Smith said.

"She's smart and reads the game well, not a lot of players can do it that well at her age."

With one season left in her high school career, Sinclair should be a leader for the Wolves this season, Smith said.

"She should be a force to be reckoned with on defense, like she always is."

Sinclair, who will join teammates and foes from her Premier Team, the Michigan Gators, said her

team will benefit from the prior knowledge of each other's styles of play.

"It's going to make Davenport stronger having girls who have played together for four years," Sinclair said.

Sinclair, a three-year member of Clarkston's varsity squad, plans to work for her degree in sports management. She said she would be interested in coaching or physical therapy in the work field.

Jordan has been playing the game since age 5, which she learned from her father who played in England.

"It gets you in good shape and I have a lot of fun with it," she said.



Jordan Sinclair, front row center, is surrounded by family and coaches while signing her letter of intent to play soccer for Davenport University of the NAIA on Nov 17. Photo provided



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Flying high

Wolves ground Birmingham Groves

BY PAUL KAMPE
Clarkston News Staff Writer

A new week and a fresh start were on tap for the Clarkston volleyball team.

The Wolves dropped a three-game opener to both defending OAA champs Birmingham Seaholm and a five-game heartbreaker to Farmington last week. The team returned from a 3-2 weekend with another OAA foe on the docket.

And after a 2-10 record in conference record in 2005-'06, the Wolves had reason to start working on their 0-2 conference standing.

The Wolves (4-4, 1-2 OAA) responded with a 3-0 sweep of Birmingham Groves (7-5-2, 0-3 OAA) on Dec. 18 at Clarkston High School.

"Sometimes you go out there (Portage) and you get beat up and you come back and play in your league, and I was worried they wouldn't come in with confidence, but I think they realized they had potential to play a lot better," Coach Kelly Avenall said.

"They're doing a great job playing as a team right now," she added.

Falcons Coach Jen Wind said her team was a bit apathetic on the court, leading to their third conference loss of the season.

"We were just complacent a little bit," Wind said.

"We are a much tougher team than we showed tonight and I wish they would have come out and played a little bit harder and played like they did this weekend and like we've seen them play before."

Groves went 4-1 in their weekend play, at the Groves Invitational the school hosts.

In the first game, Clarkston surged to a 16-10 lead and pushed ahead to the win 25-17.

Groves fought back from a 21-19 deficit in the second game, when Marilyn Porritt's cross-court kill closed it out, 25-23.

The decisive game was much closer and with the Falcons ahead 24-22 and ready to close out the game, the Wolves made a comeback at the right time.

Emily Parkin served up the winning four points for Clarkston and several Groves hits were too long and well out-of-bounds in the Wolves' 26-24 victory.

"We had a couple of situations like that this weekend where we were down three or four points against a team and we came back and won," Avenall said.

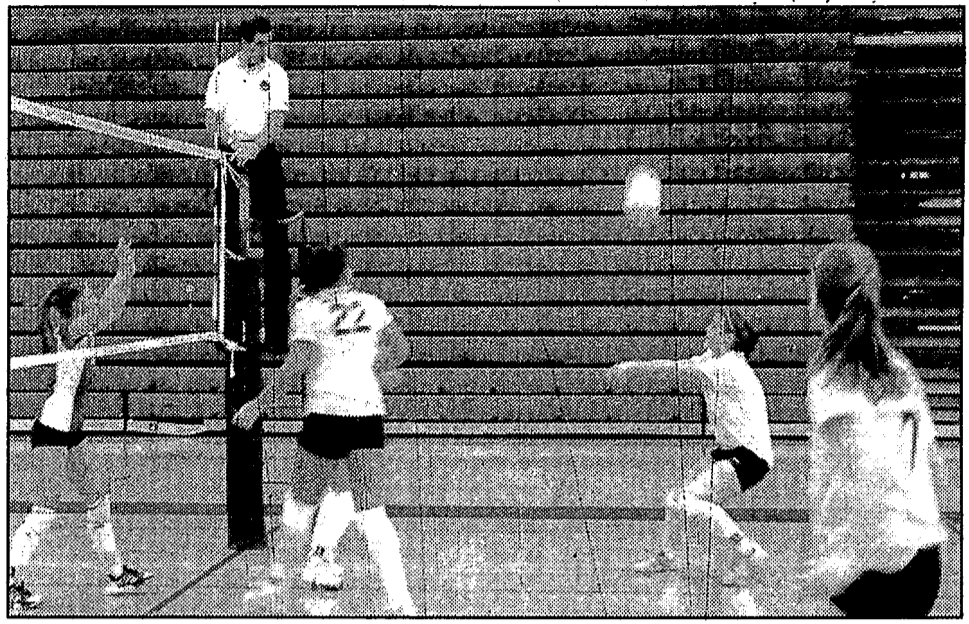
It's gaining that confidence to know that it doesn't matter where you're at in a match, you can come back and win."

Wind said the Falcons were their own toughest opponents in the game.

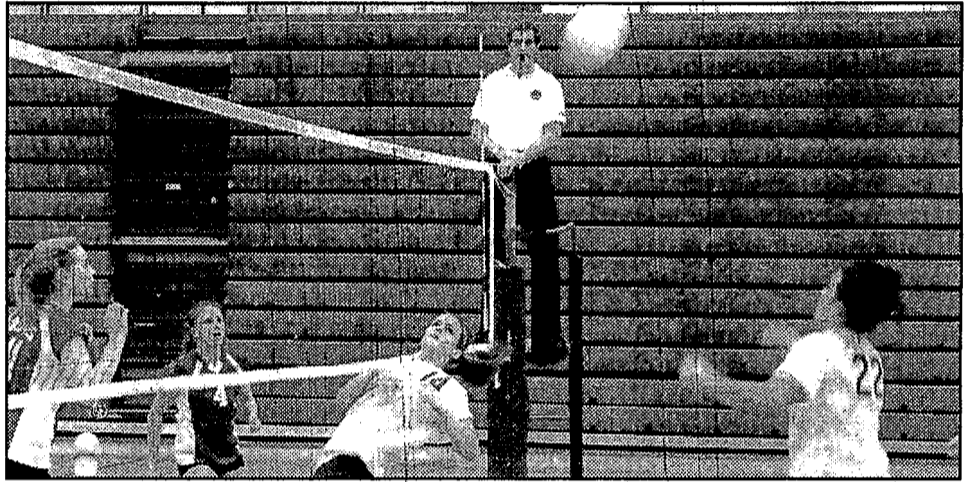
"You can't make error when the score is that close. You can't have those little mental errors when you're not focused for that half-second, they'll take advantage of it," Wind said.

"We totally beat ourselves tonight...that wasn't my team out there today," she added.

Clarkston resumes play after the holiday break on Jan. 4 at Troy.



Emily Parkin starts the Clarkston rally against Birmingham Groves on Dec. 18. The Wolves secured their first OAA victory by sweeping the Falcons. Photo by Paul Kampe



Emily Parkin rescues the ball from the clutches of the net to save the rally for Clarkston against Groves. Photo by Paul Kampe



Marilynn Porritt hits the ball for the Wolves in the season opener. Photo by Paul Kampe

Clarkston finds winning ways at invitational

BY PAUL KAMPE
Clarkston News Staff Writer

The Clarkston girls volleyball squad found its winning ways on Michigan's west side on Dec. 16.

The Wolves went 3-2 in the Portage Northern Invitational in Portage, Mich. After starting the season with two consecutive losses to league rivals Farmington and Birmingham Seaholm.

After losing the first game to East Kentwood, the Wolves rallied for three straight victories over Comstock Park, Carman Ainsworth and Paw Paw. The girls dropped the final match of the day to host Portage Northern, 25-11, 25-16 and the third game 15-10.

"I was really happy with the way

they played," Coach Kelly Avenall said.

"It's a great tournament to go to."

The five-game loss to Farmington two days earlier helped establish the team's ability in the players' thoughts, Avenall said.

"They realized they could hang with people. Even though we started 0-2, now they have realized they have realized they are good team and can definitely beat people," she said.

Throughout the tournament, outside hitter Lauren Gardner had 24 kills, setter Emily Parkin had 67 assists, middle hitter Juliann Gillespie had 21 kills and Amanda Byrd had 51 digs playing the libero position for Clarkston.

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Year

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comparable to other districts in Oakland County.

It's not 'taxation without representation': In part two of examining the results of the school survey, it was noted that while opinions differed, a majority of respondents supported the idea of non-homestead millage to fund schools and supported the school's proposal.

Millstream: Independence Township resident Jon Stevens, a technical writer between projects and vice president of the Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run Airport was featured.

April 26

School board approves cuts: Fourteen teachers in Clarkston received pink slips after the Clarkston School Board approved notification at the April 24 board meeting. However, Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts expressed confidence the teachers would have jobs come September.

Kelly to run for county commission in August: After five and a half years as an Independence Township Trustee, Dan Kelly announced his candidacy for the 4th District seat of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Marine Family Night: With red, white and blue decorations draped over the tables and a band playing music in the background, Deer Lake Athletic Club hosted Family Night for the United States Marine Corps recruiting sub-station Pontiac on April 18.

Softball growing in popularity with seniors: They can hit. They can catch. They can throw. They can do all the things necessary to win a softball game. The only thing unique about these players is their age. In the senior softball league at Clintonwood Park the youngest player is 55, and players compete well into their 70s.

Millstream: Dr. Michael Baker of Clarkston Medical Group and Independence Township was featured for his hospital work and love of music.

May 3

Voters say 'Yes': Voters approved a proposal for a 10-year, 19.2491 non-homestead millage by Clarkston Schools and chose Joseph Armstrong as the next member of the Clarkston School Board on May 2. The millage passed with 2,623 votes for and 1,154 votes against of 3,777 voters, a 69-31 margin. Only 10 percent of approximately 37,140 registered voters in the district turned out for the election. A 1,997 - 1,109 victory came for Armstrong after a quiet campaign against Renata Erickson. Armstrong will replace Secretary Sheila Hughes, who did not seek reelection.

Clarkston baseball legend dies at age 48: Steve Howe, whose life was full of ultimate highs and lows, died on April 27 when the pickup truck he was driving rolled over in Coachella, Calif. During his life, Howe became a baseball legend in Clarkston and across the nation. He helped lead Clarkston to the 1976 Class A state title. Former Clarkston baseball coach Paul Tungate remembers fondly how great Howe was in high school.

Commission denies ORCO request: After more than a year of presentations and discussions, the Independence Township Planning Commission has turned down a rezoning request from ORCO Investments in favor of their own. During the April 27 meeting, commissioners voted twice on ORCO's request to rezone almost 70 acres from single family residential to planned shopping center and highway commercial (C2 and C3) - once to table the issue and later to deny the rezoning. The property is located on the northwest corner of Sashabaw and Waldon roads near the I-75 interchange.

Millstream: Part one of a two week feature on Peter Cavanaugh's focused on his early years in New York and the course of events that brought him to Michigan where he would help launch the careers of Ted Nugent, Alice Cooper and Bob Seger.



Over 500 students graduated from Clarkston Schools on May 31. File photo

May 10

ORCO withdraws: To the surprise of Independence Township Board Trustees and residents in attendance, Orco Investments removed their petition for site-specific relief regarding a residential development during the May 3 hearing. Over the past year, Orco submitted two proposals for the property: a "big box" commercial development and a residential development.

Middleton looking forward to commission race: Oakland County Commissioner Tom Middleton said he was looking forward to running for another term in August and thinks his political experience is key to helping constituents.

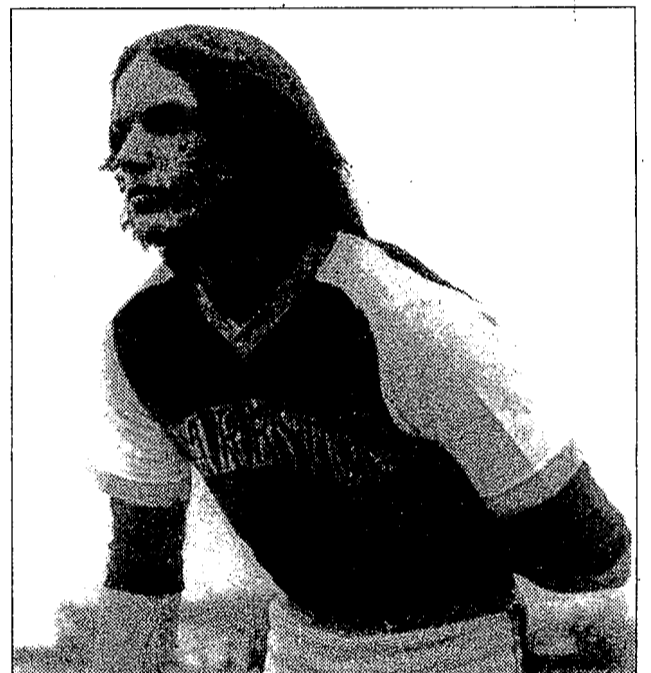
Mahoney named Teacher of the Year: On May 7, the door to Nancy Mahoney's classroom opened, a crowd of people moved in and congratulated her on being named "Teacher of the Year" by the Clarkston Foundation. Mahoney has taught math since 1990, in Clarkston since 1995.

Doubles teams playing well for Clarkston: Clarkston's No. 4 doubles team of Blake Curdy and Trent Rose have been on a tear this season and have left their opponents thinking, "It's gotta be the shoes." Curdy and Rose wear matching baby blue shoes - and have been very successful in them. The duo defeated Troy Athens' Asheesh Batra and Vikash Dilley 6-0, 5-7, 6-4 to help the Wolves tie Athens 4-4 on May 4.

Millstream: Part two of two featuring Peter Cavanaugh's history in the music and entertainment industry, including spending time with groups like The Beatles.

May 17

Springfield OKs wireless plan: Residents in Springfield Twp. should expect to have free wireless internet capabilities by the end of 2007. After Deputy County Executive Phil Bertolini answered their questions, the Springfield Township board voted unanimously to authorize Supervisor Collin Walls to enter into an agreement with Oakland County for the Wireless Oakland project. Bertolini appeared at the board's request for a county representative to be present at a meeting.



Steve Howe at the start of his senior season for the CHS varsity baseball team in 1976. File photo

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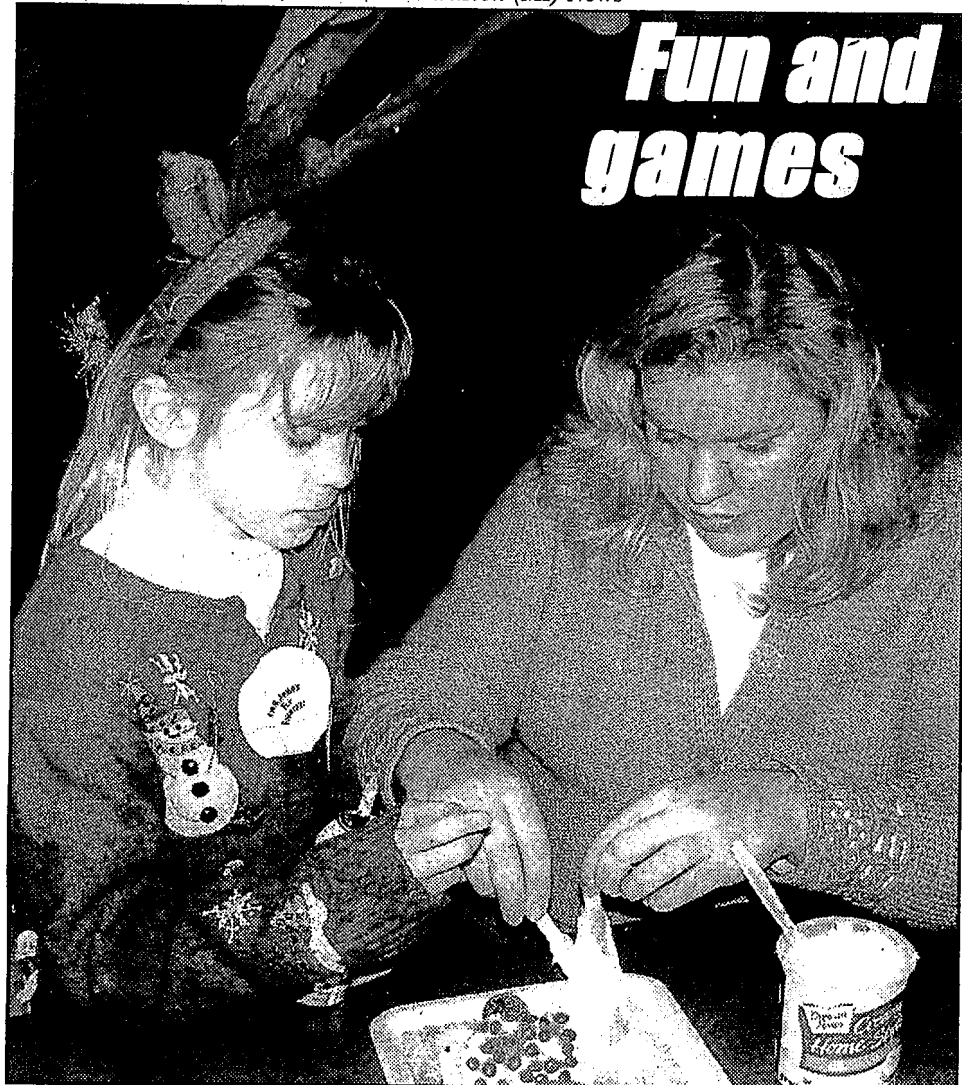
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Next week:
More 'Year in Review 2006'

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Service, Installation & Replacement
5690 Dixie Hwy., Waterford

IT'S ABOUT TIME
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Clarkston Crossing
(M-15 at I-75) Clock Sales - Repair
248-625-7180 House Calls For Grandfather Clock Service

Fun and games



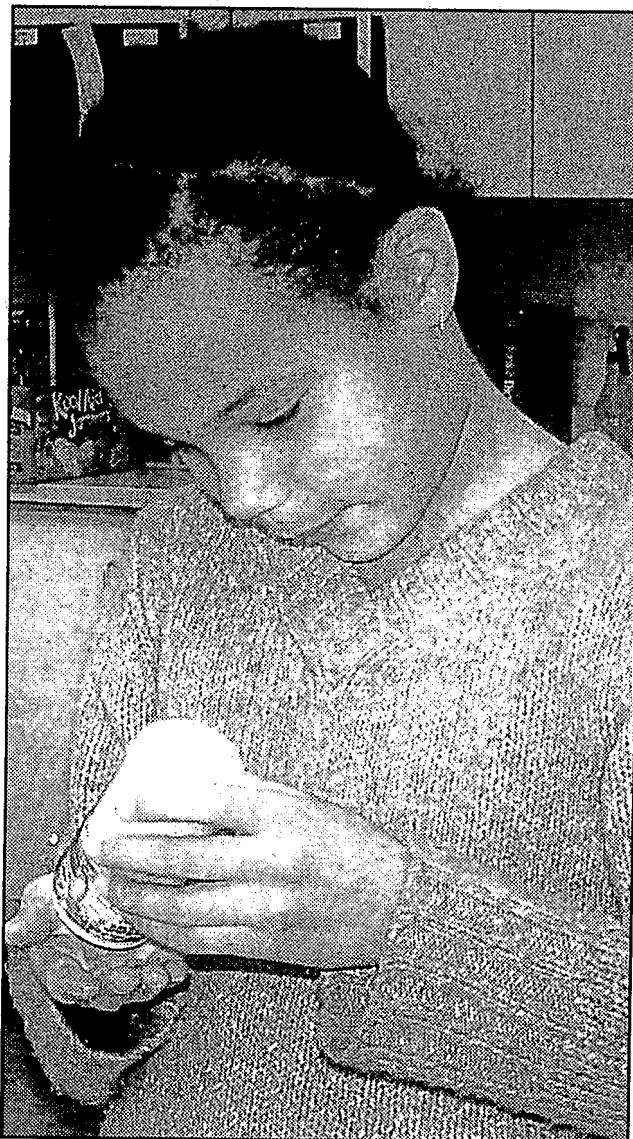
Suzanne Gozдор and her daughter Ashley Gozдор, first grader, make a gingerbread house.



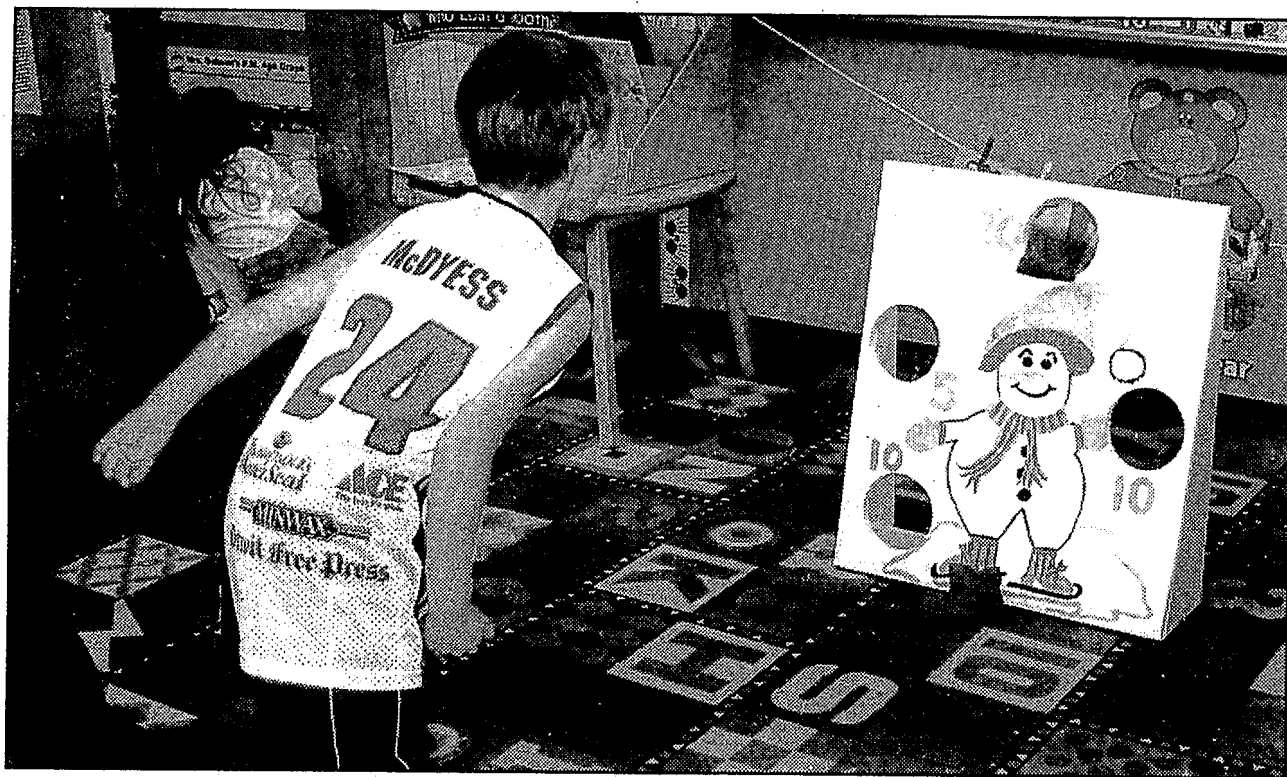
Lauren Biggs and Austin Beckman, second graders, try out their hand-made skis in the hallway.

Students, teachers, and parents at Independence Elementary School enjoyed their classroom holiday parties Wednesday with games, crafts, music, and food.

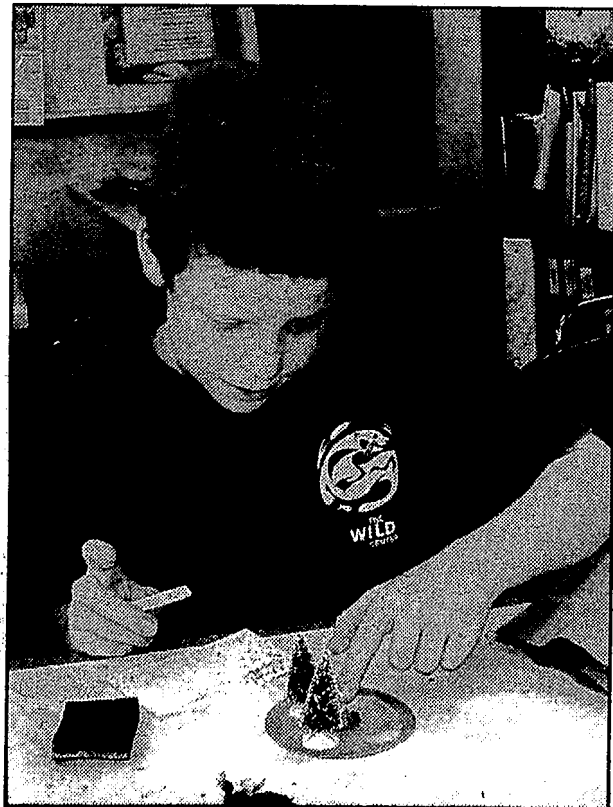
Photos by Phil Custodio



Madi Wilson, fourth-grader, tries to get the glitter sprinkler to work, as she makes an ornament.



Kindergartner Justin Spehar scores 20 points with an accurate beanbag toss.



Fourth-grader Charlie Steupert makes an ornament.



Kira Griggs and Mitchell Nelson, third-graders, try to keep cereal in their spoons long enough to help their team win a relay race.

SECTION(S)

MISSING

2007