

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Gunman arrested: Farmington Hills Police catch up with a man suspected of robbing motels in Canton and other area communities. /A2

Smart kids: The P-CEP Quiz Bowlers know their stuff. /A3

OPINION

Changing township: How will the changing face of Canton impact community leadership? /A8

ENTERTAINMENT

Music: Bound by their love of country, the Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus will present a concert of sacred music on Sunday at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Livonia. /B1

Theater: Farmington High School grad York R. Griffith is counting on "The Adding Machine" to bring new patrons to Planet Ant Theatre in Hamtramck. /B1

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Spring into cleaning: Here are some suggestions to help you clean up your housecleaning act. /C1

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Taxing proposition: New home owners end up paying more than old-timers. /E1

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Residents miffed over runway shift

More than 100 people turned out Tuesday to protest a planned change in the Mettetal Airport runway. The shift of takeoffs and landings will bring the airport into compliance with FAA standards.

BY CAROL MARSHALL
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More than 100 Canton and Plymouth Township residents packed the Canton Township Board of Trustees meeting room Tuesday to protest a 240-foot runway shift at the state-owned Mettetal Airport.

The Bureau of Aeronautics approached the board about the shift, stating pilots and the

Airport Advisory Board had grown concerned over pilot and motorist safety, and the runway's proximity to Joy Road.

The runway is located 50 feet south of Joy Road, east of Lilley Road.

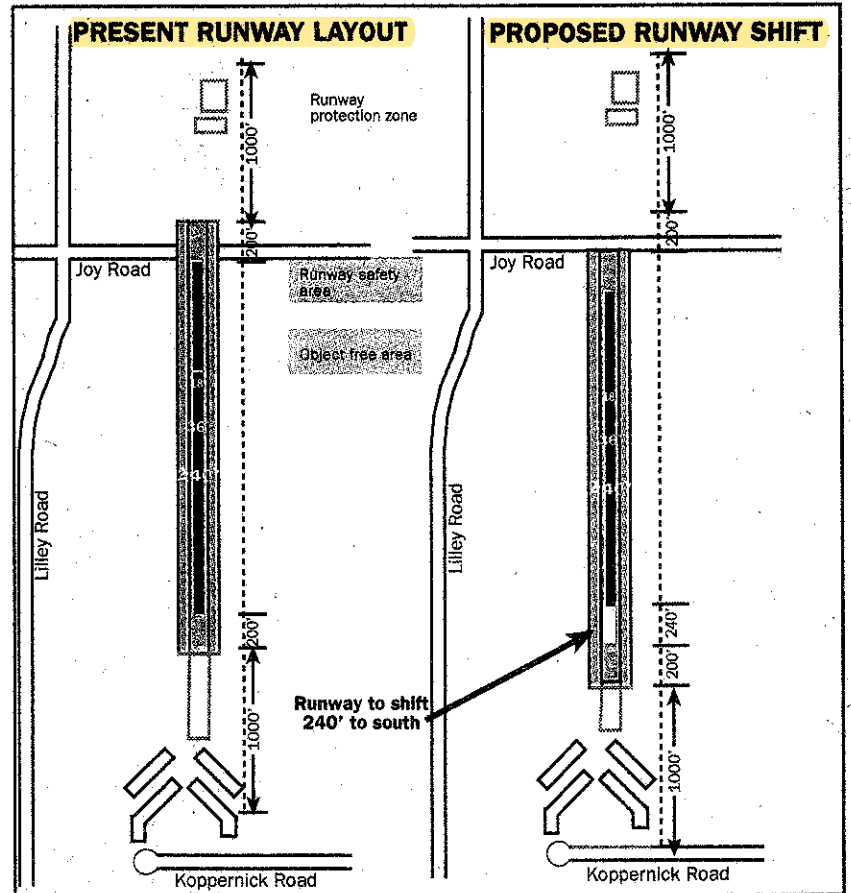
Supervising Engineer Mark Noel said the shift to the south would decrease the likelihood of an aircraft sliding off the end of the runway and onto Joy, potentially crashing into motorist.

Noel said the proposal is a shift, not an expansion, and the pavement at the north of the runway could either be torn up or left in place to provide an additional paved buffer between the runway and the road.

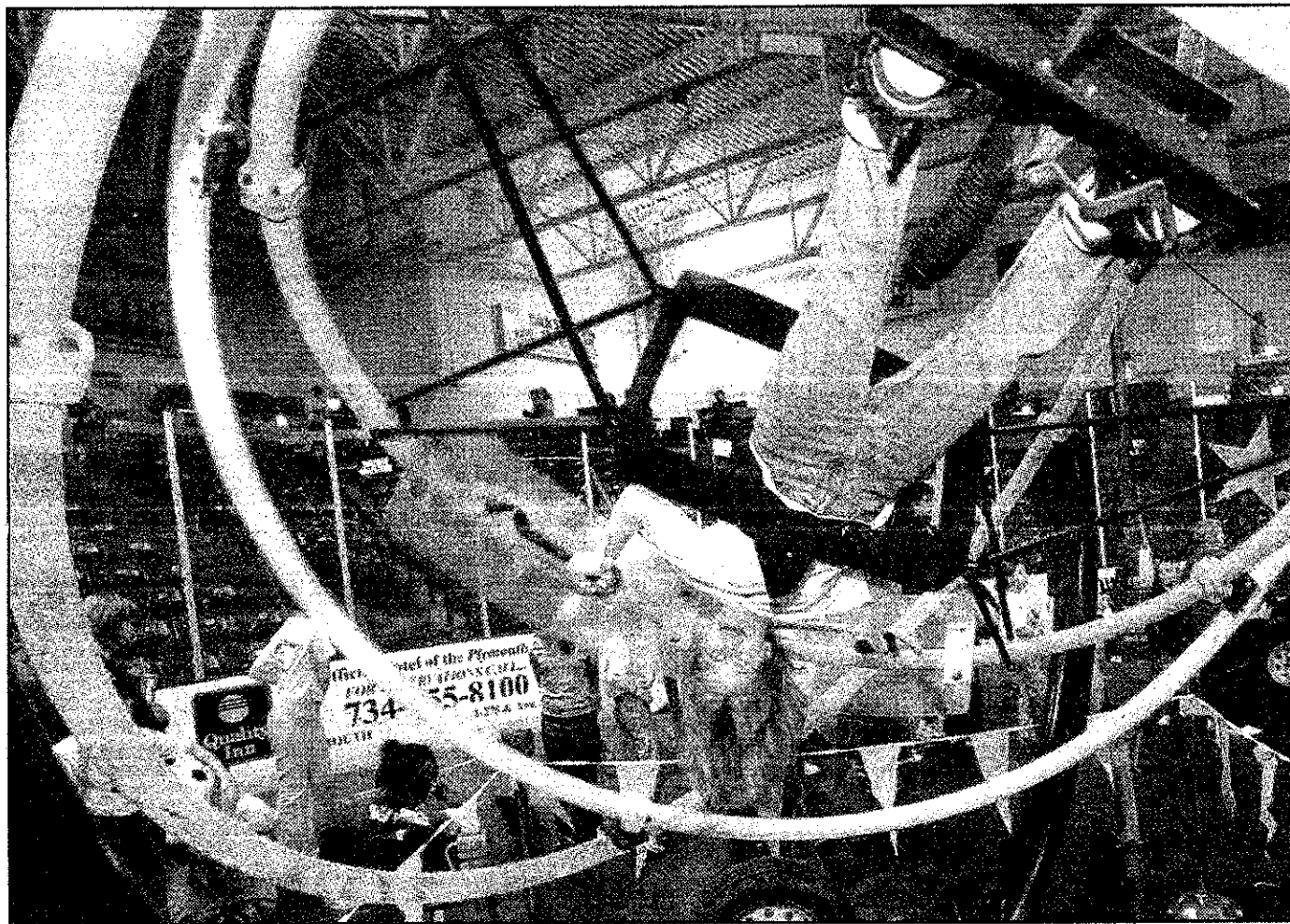
By contract, the 2,556-foot runway cannot be modified without a resolution from Canton and the state.

"If you put down one square inch of pave-

Please see AIRPORT, A5



Having a ball to support PCA



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

Spin doctor: Kelly Garber of Canton, 11, spins in every direction on the Gyroscope ride during Friday's fund-raiser at Computware Arena for the Plymouth Christian Academy. The Canton parochial school marked its 25th anniversary with this year's event, titled "Have A Ball." The evening of food, entertainment and celebrities featured area sports personalities including University of Michigan football coach Lloyd Carr and several former Detroit Tigers. Proceeds from the gala will go for new sports equipment and facilities at the school on Joy Road.

Expansion on horizon for Leisure Services

BY CAROL MARSHALL
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The newly created Canton Leisure Services Department is reorganizing and expanding. The department's growth has created a need for three additional full-time staffers.

The Canton Township Board of Trustees last week approved several expansions in the Recreation and Leisure Services department. One of the items approved was the creation of a recreation specialist staff position to coordinate teen and after-school activities.

"Several people have approached me about programs for young people," said leisure services Director Ann Conklin. "There's a lot of support for us to move forward in this area."

The township has few programs for young people between 12-17, Conklin said. To build and coordinate youth programs, the community needs a staff person dedicated to the project, she said.

The township has not decided what kinds of programs will be offered.

"We have a lot of ideas, but to be fair to the person we hire, they need to come in and get their feet wet. They

Please see LEISURE, A6

Growth in southwest Canton spurs school talk

BY TONY BRUSCATO
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As Plymouth-Canton Schools enjoys its first year at Discovery Middle School, aims to open Dodson Elementary in August, and has long-range plans to open Plymouth High School in

August 2002, there is already talk of building another elementary school in Canton to address future growth.

The district's Housing and Facilities Committee, which just completed elementary school boundary changes for the upcoming school year, is recommending the administration and trustees address the growth "to con-

firm the need for additional elementary buildings and that the Board move forward with the bond planning process for additional elementary space. We recommend that the Board review their property holdings for a new location to accommodate future growth areas in the district."

The immediate future growth is

expected to come from Canton's southwest side, where a number of new and proposed subdivisions are planned, putting the squeeze on already-bulging elementary buildings, including the yet-to-be opened Dodson.

"We're at capacity in some buildings,

Please see TALK, A5

This old house Historic Canton adds to its portfolio

BY ALICE ASHMORE
STAFF WRITER

Although Canton is perceived as a new and growing community, its historic roots run deep.

Nine local properties have just been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

"With Canton's ever-changing landscape and growth, the recognition and protection of these properties becomes more necessary to ensure our connection to our heritage," said Melissa McLaughlin, co-chairwoman of the Canton Historic Commission.

"When the Canton Historic Commission was formed in the 1980s, the idea was to do this kind of work," she said.

As a result of the Historic Commission's work, several historic districts had been formed within the city. "We reviewed 25 properties and recommended 10 for submission to the National Register.

To be included, a building has to have architectural and/or historic integrity," McLaughlin said. "The building must represent an insight into the history of the area."

Please see HISTORIC, A4



STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL HURSCHEMANN

Living history: Laura Blair Johnson and her husband, David, are owners of the George and Mary Pine Smith House, 3704 S. Sheldon. The Victorian style home is one of the few all-brick homes from that era.

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ment, that's an expansion," said Plymouth Township resident Bob Zaetta, former spokesperson for the Concerned Citizens grassroots group who opposed the 1993 state purchase of the airport.

Noel said the runway does not currently meet FAA safety zone standards, and shifting the runway is one way to bring the runway into compliance. While the proposal was brought up because of pilot concerns, he added compliance is linked to future FAA funding for capital improvements.

When Trustee Robert Shefferly asked when the FAA standards went into effect, Noel stated they were implemented in 1989, five years before the state purchased the formerly private airport. The airport has since 1989 been operating under a waiver from the FAA, but the waiver could be revoked at any time because the FAA has been examining the waivers after a fatal 1999 aircraft crash in Little Rock, Ark., Noel said.

That was news to Zaetta. "We were told that this airport was safe and that this airport was in total compliance with all state and federal standards," he said. "I think we were misled."

The majority of the meeting's attendees were Coves of Canton condominium residents, who said the shift would effect their safety and quality of life.

Dan Herriman, whose firm manages three communities, including the Coves, said 102 homeowners had signed a petition in opposition to the shift, and 146 had sent letters expressing concerns.

"The state and Canton Township ought to find another location altogether," Herriman said, prompting applause from the audience.

Mike Stankov, Plymouth Township resident who also opposed the state purchase and who later served four years on the advisory board, still opposes changes to the airports.

He said he opposes the changes because it's a waste of tax money. He questioned how much the shift would cost, and Noel stated he didn't know, but estimated \$50,000.

"There was approximately \$7 million paid for this airport with yours and my tax dollars," Stankov said, also noting the state paid the property owner to the south of the runway \$972,000 for an air easement. "There's been a lot of money pumped into what is essentially a hobby airport."

Further, Stankov said the state has designated Canton as a "non-densely populated area," which enables the particularly noisy Ultra Light aircraft to use the airport.

Vasilios Damavletes, the owner of the property and buildings abutting the runway's south said he knew nothing about such a payment.

Damavletes' son, Charles, said

he was not notified of the meeting by the township like the homeowners south of the runway were. He said the runway's encroachment on his business could put at risk the lives of the 300 employees who work in his buildings at the west end of Koppernick. The shift would put the runways 400 feet from Damavletes' two-story buildings.

Township Supervisor Tom Yack said the board is not required to take any action on the issue, but could place it on an agenda and put it to a vote.

The resolution to approve or deny the extension will be placed on the April 24 agenda.

Bomb threat exam adjourned

VAN BUREN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A preliminary exam for a Belleville High School teacher charged with making a telephone bomb threat was adjourned Wednesday while his attorney looks at a possible plea bargain in the case.

The exam for Scott Ridders, 25, of Van Buren Township was rescheduled for 9 a.m. April 25 by Judge Brian Oakley over the objection of Maria Petito, Wayne County assistant prosecutor.

Ridders \$10,000 personal bond was continued.

"We need to look at alternative options in regards to resolving the case and whether or not we'll go through with the exam," defense attorney Paul J. Stablein said following the five-minute hearing in 34th District Court, Romulus.

Ridders is charged with making a false bomb threat, a four-year felony. A felony conviction could result in the loss of his

Michigan teaching certificate.

Police said Ridders, an assistant band director, allegedly called in a bomb threat at 6:30 a.m. March 21. A school secretary received the threat in a voice mail message later that morning.

According to police reports, the call was traced to a cell phone allegedly registered to Ridders and school employees

identified his voice on the recording.

Stablein also said he has yet to receive police reports and other information regarding the case.

The prosecution had subpoenaed several witnesses and was ready to proceed Wednesday, Petito said.

Oakley released the subpoena of a witness from Grand Rapids, ruling that her testimony could be stipulated to when court proceedings resume.

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PARISIAN

Talk from A1

and we're especially concerned about the affects of The Hamlet subdivision and Cherry Hill Village," said Marcy Staley, a member of the district's Housing and Facilities Committee. "It's a puzzle, and it's hard to apply numbers we don't have yet. Until we get ahead of the growth curve it will be difficult to assess."

Staley said the committee is suggesting the district look at one additional elementary school "for the time being," and that trustees "look for more property" to expand in growth areas.

Staley also suggests the district start taking a hard look at property in Salem Township, which she believes could be the next growth area for the district. The committee is also keeping an eye on Plymouth Township.

Superintendent Kathleen Booher said "we're not shocked" to hear the recommendations of the committee.

"We knew we would need to talk about our growth and where we'll house students," she said. "We currently have a facilities study being conducted which will tell us the current condition of all our buildings, and the potential to expand some of our current schools. We need to look at our growth projections and our timeline."

Booher said there are economic advantages to adding onto current school buildings, but "we also need to think of the quality and the numbers in the buildings."

"The advantage to new buildings is that it strives to address our growth in relation to geography," she said.

Booher said the district needs to create a balance between future growth and a conservative construction plan.

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