

Friday, November 27, 2003 A Messenger Post Newspaper • Official Newspaper for Perinton & Fairport \$1.00 Per Copy

**ESQUE** **HEAD START:** A local program of budding firefighters has tripled in size. **5A**

**SIGHTS OF THE SEASON:** The village tree-lighting ceremony is this weekend. **BULLETIN BOARD, 4B**

**MOVIES:** Our critic reviews "Master and Commander." **OUT & ABOUT**

**SPORTS:** Kasey Pontillo signs her letter of intent to play college lacrosse. **10B**

## Dating's disappearing act



They're all just friends: Juniors Katie Lear (left) and Sabina Beachell and senior Adam Gaya share a laugh during lunch in the Fairport High School cafeteria. While many students do still date, a national study finds that student dating is at its lowest level in 10 years.

*Teen social behavior is changing: Dating is becoming old-fashioned, but sex is still modern*

By BENJAMIN WACHS  
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Here's one for the SA's: Teenager is to Dating as Fact is to Fiction.

If you watch MTV, if you read *Seventeen* magazine, if you even look at TV commercial ads for "The OC," then you know that a teenager's life is a lipstick-colored roller coaster on a heart-shaped track. The winning, pining and speed dialing of hormone-inflicted pubescence turns dating into an unstoppable adolescent rite-of-passage, like wrecking the car.

Sam ergo Datum: "They are, therefore they date."

Lies, all of it.

An ongoing national poll conducted by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center shows that teenage dating is actually

at its lowest point in over a decade. In 2003, the research suggests, about as many teenagers are living *à la vida loca* as still listen to Ricky Martin.

Nationally, half of eighth-graders don't date at all — up slightly from a decade ago; a third of 10th graders never date — up about 5 percent from a decade ago; and almost a fourth of seniors never date, up about 8 percent over the last 10 years.

And of those seniors who date, only a fourth of them go out on more than one date a week. The numbers are even lower in other grades.

Bottom line: students are less likely to date at all than they were 10 years ago, and those who date do so less frequently — even if they're still having as much sex.

The Fairport Central School District has no hard data on the number of dates its stu-

dents go on, but high school Principal Dave Paddock said the national data doesn't surprise him at all.

"That would be my observation right here," he said.

**Ya gotta have friends**

Paddock's pretty sure that Fairport teens have found a better option.

"When I was a kid, you had dates," Paddock said. "Something I've noticed over the years is that kids tend to do more things with their friends as a group — dating's the wrong word for it. It's a group of seven or eight guys and girls and they hang out together."

Teens approaching things as groups, rather than couples, can even extend into the most traditional "dating" activities, Paddock said.

"I was eating breakfast with a group of stu-

## Streetscape plan draws green and yellow lights

Many agree the plan is a beautiful vision for downtown Main Street, but merchants urge more discussion.

By BENJAMIN WACHS  
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Local business owners have two signals to send Village Hall about its proposed streetscape plan — some give it a green light while others say "proceed with caution."

More than 50 merchants and residents came to last Tuesday's public unveiling — the best turnout to a streetscape presentation so far.

Previously, merchants like Jeanne Byassee, a Main Street business owner and director of the Fairport-Perinton Merchant's Association, called the plan "gorgeous." No one at last week's meeting challenged that assessment.

"It's obviously beautiful. It reminded me of Niagara on the lake very much, which is a place that I frequent," said Emily Peterson of the village in Ontario, Canada. Peterson owns Candy Nation.

Sebastian Curatolo, who owns Arrivederci's Pizza & Subs, said when he saw the plan, "One of the first things I felt was pride, to know that our community leaders are looking into the future. I was very, very, very positive about what I saw. It looks to me like it's going to be a desirable looking thing."

As a result, he said he is "absolutely" in favor of the village moving ahead as soon as possible.

"To me, it's a no-brainer," he said. "I think it's a well-thought out plan. They're trying to make Fairport a destination, and I think it's a positive thing for me as a longtime business owner."

But Peterson urged much more caution.

"It is an ambitious plan, and I would hope that the village would take its time doing it," she said. "If they do not take their time doing it I foresee pretty horrendous traffic problems and pedestrian problems while it's going on."

Mayor Clark King has said the plan, if approved, would probably be phased in over time rather than attempted all at once — partially out of concern for the amount of work the full plan would require and partly out of deference to its price, estimated at more than \$2 million in total.

## A hammer, a saw and an education for BOCES students

Carpentry classes help reconstruct their Fairport campus building after an electrical fire.

By BENJAMIN WACHS  
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When a storage building in JOCES' Fairport compound caught fire in June, it suffered \$50,000 worth of damage and needed major repairs, but no public bidding process went out.

After all, BOCES does have a carpentry class. What's a better school project than building the school?

In fact the building, nicknamed "The Lodge," was originally built by JOCES carpentry classes in the 1970s. It's served as everything from a multipurpose room to a physical education center before being turned over to storage for the last 10 years.

Now, 20 advanced carpentry students and 23 basic carpentry stu-

dents are putting the finishing touches on a project that involved a complete tear-off of the roof, construction of a new truss roof, installation of roofing, construction of some new interior walls, and enclosure of the second story porch. The project should be finished by the end of the month.

Bret Walker, who teaches carpentry for EMCC and DOCES, said that the reconstruction gives his students a chance to practice every aspect of a professional job — including working with customers.

"The students met with our BOCES operations and maintenance staff to get their input on how they visualize the final remodeling," Walker said. "They are our customers on this project. So the students have to listen to what the operations people want and understand what their vision is and then we help the students reconstruct that plan."

Michael Weigert, an advanced carpentry student from East Rochester, said that "The reconstruction is profes-

sional educational.

"They teach us different ways of how to do things the right way and how to fix things when we do them wrong. This project will be good experience to help me find an apprenticeship in carpentry when I graduate in May."

David Battle, a basic carpentry student from Honesoye Falls-Lima, said that the class was helping him get his feet wet in the construction field.

"I love the demolition part of the reconstruction," he said. "I hope to own my own company some day. This is definitely more advanced level training than I could get in my home school."

Walker noted that 80 percent of his students go into carpentry, and most start out in the remodeling business.

"This is a valuable, real-life scenario for them," he said. "They learn what it takes to plan, cost out the materials and complete the job. This is the push these advanced students need to get them on their way to a career in carpentry."



Carpentry students Paul Smith and Brian Wells remove nails to correct the roof truss centers on the BOCES building they are renovating behind the Forman Center. The building was damaged by an electrical fire last spring.

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**Gift Guide**

Our holiday gift guide is filled with ideas from local merchants.

**Church Services**

If your church wishes to participate in the annual listing of "Christmas in the Churches" services, send the information to us by noon on Friday, Dec. 5. The list will be published on Dec. 18. See page 2A for contact information.



# Dating becoming old-fashioned for teens

**> DATING**, from page 1A  
students today, five or six guys and five or six girls, and I know that when prom time comes, they'll ask each other 'who do you want to go with?' and members of the group will go with each other," Paddock said. "That won't mean that they're dating."

High school students emphatically backed Padlock up, saying that while students do date, it's who your friends are that really matters. "It's more fun to be in a big group than one on one," said student Sara Wolanski. "There's no awkward silences, you meet more people, and then you have more fun."

Student Katie McCormick said "You get stronger relationships with people in groups." And student Matt McGraw added "There are fewer awkward situations."

Student Jessi Thaler said groups are able to accommodate diversity in ways that couples aren't. "Hanging out, our group is so diverse," she said. "It's a lot more fun. We make a lot of great memories."

Padlock said "That's a downside." McGraw said "I think there's less intimacy and more fly-by-night relationships." Asked if that was a good trade off, he said "Definitely not."

Debra Tandoi, the school district's asset coordinator, said she thinks it is societal pressures, rather than the new social structures, that keep sexual activity high. "If you look at the society, between MTV and the media, it just seems like it's escalating everything sexual," she said. "Frankly, while we'd like to get the number (of students having sex) down, I think keeping it stable is an accomplishment."

**Ya gotta have sex**  
Students may be changing their social behavior, but those changes only go so far. According to the state of New York "Youth at Risk Survey" for 2003, while Fairport students may be dating less, they are having just as much sex, if not more.

In 1999, 30 percent of Fairport students admitted to having sex. In 2001, 34 per-

cent admitted to having sex, and in 2003, 35 percent. This, too, doesn't surprise students interviewed, who said while there is less dating, there are more "hook ups." And they admitted that they're not happy about it. "There is also an increase in physical activity in people who aren't together," Heisman said. "That's a downside."

"I think getting to know each other in a group of friends is a healthier way," Heisman said. "It's a lot less pressure." McCormick said that "When you're in a strong group of friends, it makes it easier not to have a boyfriend or girlfriend."

### Ya gotta have an explanation

The University of Michigan survey has no explanation for the changing social behavior of the teenagers it surveys. Asked what he thought caused the changes, Padlock admitted he, too, was stumped. "I don't have a clue," he said.

The students, too, were unsure, although they had a few suggestions. "The marriage age has gone up," McGraw said. "That's probably one of the reasons formal dating probably doesn't happen until college." Wolanski suggested that with more opportunities for high school-age students, it's a perfectly natural decision. "It's a trade-off," she said. "We pretty much view high school as a chance to make the most of everything, and it's not like there's a hole in your social life just because you don't have this one person."

# Merchants urge more time and discussion on streetscape

**> STREETScape**, from page 1A  
the merchant community is something she'll watch closely. "I think it's imperative that they keep us informed," she said. "It seems like it would be overseen by Fairport firms, and that's important to me. If it's done carefully, I think it will benefit Fairport."

Peterson said, so far, the village's presentation was "excellent." And Curatolo said he was already impressed by the village's willingness to take suggestions.

"(Tuesday) night they asked for input," he said. "It's clearly not something that they want to force on us." Trustee Leslie White said there is "definitely room for discussion."

"People had questions about everything from bicycle traffic to parking, and we're certainly taking notes," she said. "This project, if we move forward with it, will require significantly more community discussion." The one thing she doesn't have any answers for right now is how the village - which is as strapped for spare change as every other municipality in the state - will pay for the plan's implementation. "I think the cost is something that, at first blush, can be a bit overwhelming," she said. "I don't know how the finances behind it are going to happen. State funding is available for changes like this, but we all know that state funding is in short supply. Still, we'll try, and I think it's good that we have a forward thinking plan."

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