



READING AND EATING -- About 200 youngsters in grades 2-6 from Campbell Elementary School and Cass City Intermediate participated in the read-in after school Monday in the intermediate gym, held in conjunction with national Children's Book Week. Many of the children, it appears, had a bigger appetite for the snacks provided by parents than they did for reading.



In Goslin property transfer cas

Final Owen-Gage decision could be a year away

It could be a year before the Michigan Supreme Court issues a decision in the Goslin property transfer case, which could determine the fate of the Owendale-Gagetown School District.

The seven justices heard oral arguments in Lansing Monday morning in Owen-Gage's appeal of the October, 1979, Court of Appeals ruling that the property is part of the Cass City School District.

Following the approximately one-hour hearing, Corbin Davis, deputy clerk of the Supreme Court, told the Chronicle, "We have no idea when it (the case) is going to be decided."

One year is the average time it takes, he said, but some cases, depending on their complexity, take longer than that. Others are decided in as short a time as two months.

The Goslin territory was transferred by the state Board of Education to the Cass City district in May, 1976, after more than 40 property owners involved appealed rejection of their transfer request by the Tuscola and Huron Intermediate School Districts Boards of Education.

The property has a current state equalized valuation of \$4.71 million, which at Owen-Gage's 21.5 mill tax rate for operations, would bring it \$101,231. Property taxes presently go to Cass City.

Should Owen-Gage lose, it would clear the way for possibly other transfers, which wouldn't leave the district with enough territory to survive.

Its attorney, James F. Schouman of Dearborn, asked the Supreme Court Monday to rule that the present state law means that if 10 percent of the original school district has been transferred away, any subsequent property transfer requests must be approved by a vote of persons living in the district.

Assistant Attorney General Gerald Young, representing the state school board, argued that if the property involved is 10 percent or less of the total taxable valuation of the district at the time of the transfer, no public vote is required. By that standard, the Goslin territory was 9.3 percent of the district.

Schouman told the justices that Owen-Gage does not

want the state board to substitute its knowledge for the knowledge of the legislature, local school districts and the people of the local districts.

To allow the current practice to continue, he argued, would allow a small group of disgruntled property owners to frustrate the majority of persons living in a school district.

Young countered that the avenue to change the present state law on property transfers is through the legislature.

THERE WAS DISCUSSION about the significance of the bill introduced by State Rep. Quincy Hoffman, R-Applegate, that would require a public vote once more than 10 percent of the original school district had been transferred away.

The bill was approved by the House of Representatives in April, 1976, but since then has been bottled up in the Senate Education Committee.

Justice John W. Fitzgerald asked attorney Young, in apparent agreement with him, why a new law is needed if, as Schouman argued, the present law is meant to be cumulative, that

a vote is required after 10 percent is transferred away. Justice Thomas Giles Kavanagh responded that perhaps Hoffman's bill is meant to clarify the intent of the legislature when it approved the original law.

Justice James L. Ryan commented that bills in the legislature, that is, proposed laws, can't be used to show legislative intent.

CHIEF JUSTICE MARY Coleman asked Schouman why property owners had sought to transfer to other districts.

His response was a defense of the district, including that it is accredited (it wasn't at the time of the Goslin transfer) and some students have done well in National Merit Scholarship competition.

Young had mentioned that those seeking the transfer wanted their property in a larger, accredited school district, where more than half of the students involved at the time were already going (as tuition students).

IN ADDITION TO THE 10 percent rule, Owen-Gage is asking the Supreme Court to decide whether the state board acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner, that is, without examining all the evidence, in approving the Goslin transfer.

In its written brief, submitted by Schouman prior to the oral hearing, it asks that should the justices rule against the district on the 10 percent issue, that it "re-mand this proceeding to the Ingham County Circuit Court so the plaintiff (Owen-Gage) may properly try their case on the question of whether the transfer of the Goslin property by the state Board of Education was arbitrary and capricious, thereby constituting an abuse of discretion."

Young's response Monday to that request was that Owen-Gage had never brought up that issue when its case was before the Court of Appeals, therefore was not subject to appeal.

THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL won a round during the hearing, when Schouman tried to use large maps to show various property transfers, as a means of clarifying the issue to the justices.

Young objected, stating the maps had not been introduced in the lower courts as evidence and that he had not seen them before.

The court ruled in his favor, with Justice Coleman saying the maps hadn't been properly introduced as evidence. They were then removed from the courtroom.

Among those attending the hearing from Owen-Gage were Supt. Ronald Erickson, school board members Ronald Good, Pat Goslin, Jack Brinkman, Leona LaFave, Duane Ziehm and Joe Warack and the 12th grade government class.

Berry tabs Megge as No. 2 man

Sheriff-elect Paul Berry stayed within the sheriff's department in selecting his new undersheriff.

Named by him Tuesday afternoon to fill the position was Paul Megge, presently a lieutenant, who has been with the department since August, 1968. He has been a lieutenant five years.

Elevated to lieutenant was Sgt. Jerry Osborne, who has been with the department since 1973.

Taking Osborne's place will be Leland Teschendorf, who has been a deputy with the department since 1973.

The changes are effective Jan. 1, when Berry takes office, taking over for retiring Hugh Marr.

The incoming sheriff said he doesn't foresee any other changes in the near future.

Whether a new deputy will be hired to take the spot being vacated by Teschendorf, he explained, depends on whether there will be money available. That depends on whether the state legislature renews funding of the secondary road patrol program and congress renews federal revenue sharing, which can mean \$300,000 annually to the county.

The present undersheriff, Bruce Tait, will not be offered a position in the department, said Berry.

More and more burn firewood

Cost of keeping warm increases, but usually less than inflation rate

By Mike Eliasohn

Chances are Michigamans won't be blessed with another mild winter, like the one a year ago.

The long range forecast is for normal winter temperatures and lots of snow.

Although homeowners likely will be using more heating fuel this winter -- gas, fuel oil, wood or whatever -- the per unit cost, at least as of now, won't be up much over last year, probably less than the overall inflation rate.

None of the fuel distributors contacted by the Chronicle is expecting any shortages.

FUEL OIL

In contrast to past years, when sharp increases were the rule, the price of fuel oil is only up about a penny at most over what it was at the end of last winter. Over the course of the 1979-80 winter, the cost went up about 10 cents per gallon.

Current prices quoted by dealers contacted were 98.9 cents or \$1.009 per gallon of No. 2 fuel oil and \$1.029 or \$1.049 for No. 1.

As for what the price will

be by the time winter is over, Cass City Oil and Gas owner Duane Chippi commented, "That's anybody's guess." He does expect it will increase some.

Dennis Koch, vice-president and general manager of Gagetown Oil and Gas, said the future price of fuel oil is "kind of a hard thing to predict."

Both said they are still losing customers to less expensive types of fuel but they don't expect that situation to last forever. Decontrol of natural gas prices by the federal government starts Jan. 1, they said, and by 1983, Chippi predicted, natural gas will cost as much or more than fuel oil.

NATURAL GAS

During the winter of 1979-80, the average Southeastern Michigan Gas Co. homeowner customer paid \$63.10 per month for heat, according to Jan Mitchell, the firm's public relations representative. The figure does not include the cost of gas for ovens, clothes dryers, water heaters, etc.

If the Michigan Public Service Commission grants the utility's entire requested

rate increase, now pending, that same amount of gas used by the average customer last winter would cost \$77.36.

Southeastern may not get all that it wants, but, "We'd rather project high than low," she said. It is seeking a 17 percent increase due to higher operating costs (for labor, etc.) and the cost of gas it must purchase. The MPSC decision is expected any time.

BOTTLED GAS

Prices quoted by the two area dealers were 62 cents or 66.7 cents per gallon, with the average customer using from 1,000-2,000 gallons of bottled gas per winter.

The price is up 4 cents or "a couple of cents" from what it was at the end of last winter, depending on the dealer.

As for the future price, Cass City Fuelgas Manager Ken Eisinger predicted, "I can see a slow, steady increase, but I can't see an influx, no way."

Belva Schott, manager at Petrolane Gas Service in Gagetown, also expects gradual increases of a penny or two, but nothing large.

ELECTRICITY

Customers with electrically heated homes will be paying 8.5 percent more for their electricity than they did last winter, assuming they were to use the same amount of electricity, according to George Anderson, Detroit Edison general supervisor for Tuscola county.

The utility recently received an interim rate increase from the MPSC. The increase in the cost of fuel is the other reason for the boost in price.

Anderson doesn't anticipate the MPSC will rule on Edison's overall rate increase request until winter is over.

Fuel surcharges due to increases in the cost of fuel Edison burns (mostly coal) to produce electricity can be added any time, but the anticipation is they will be made at a steady rate, maybe 8-10 percent a year, instead of the sharper increases in the past.

There are about 1,000 homes in Tuscola county with electric heat.

The average electric heat customer (1,000 square-foot home) paid \$107 per month

from November of last year through May and \$46 per month from June through October, for a total of \$979, of which \$454 was for heat and the rest for other purposes. The 8.5 percent increase should be added to that.

FIREWOOD

Use of firewood continues to grow in popularity, and with it, apparently, the number of persons selling it.

The Chronicle talked to four dealers, two of them in business for the first time this year.

One of those in business last year, Dick Heronemus of Downingtown Road, Decker, said he is only selling about the same amount of wood as he did last year, because of increased competition.

Prices vary, with most apparently up \$5 a face cord from last year.

One seller's price was \$20 for softwood, delivered, \$25 mixed and \$30 for hardwood. The hardwood price was up \$2 over a year ago. The softwood price was \$5 less, the result of heavy competition.

Another charges \$25 a pickup load of green wood

delivered. That's slightly more than a face cord.

One of the newcomers to the business was charging \$30 per face cord of unsplit white ash and \$35 split. The other one, who had already sold the few cords he had, charged \$23 per face cord, \$25 delivered.

The General Motors of local firewood dealers is Joe Viny of Cemetery Road, south of Cass City. He started selling wood a year ago when he was laid off as a supervisor at Sebewaung Industries.

He now is in the business full-time, year-round, em-

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How much state money for schools? Crouse wishes he knew

How much state aid will the Cass City schools get for the present school year? Supt. Donald Crouse wishes he knew.

Gov. William Milliken announced last Wednesday he

was proposing to cut \$288.5 million in state spending, making it a total of about \$1 billion in cuts since January because of eroded state revenues. Included in the latest reduction was \$65

million in state school aid.

The effect on Cass City schools, Crouse explained, won't be known, however, until the legislature passes the school aid bill as part of the state budget for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1. "We don't know what the legislature will do."

Present state spending is being controlled by the governor under temporary authority given him by the legislature until it approves the new budget.

There is, so to speak, more than one way to cut the pie, which makes it impossible to figure the amount of state school aid by simple subtraction whenever the governor announces a proposed cut.

Out of almost \$2.8 billion in operating revenues Cass City received during the 1979-80 school year, not in-

cluding federal aid, 43.37 percent came from Lansing. Property taxes provided about 55 percent.

The 1980-81 budget approved by the school board Oct. 27 "guesstimated" state revenues at 38.2 percent.

IN 1979-80, ACCORDING to figures Crouse obtained from the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA), the state spent \$1.483 billion for general education (not including colleges and universities).

In February of this year, Milliken proposed to the legislature that it appropriate \$1.541 billion for schools for the fiscal year that was to start Oct. 1.

In March, with state revenues on the decline, he reduced that to \$1.469 billion. In August, he chopped the

recommendation to \$1.37 billion and last week, to \$1.305 billion.

In addition to those proposed reductions in 1980-81 aid, Milliken reduced the August aid payment to schools by \$35 million, which was money from the state's 1979-80 fiscal year. (The fiscal year for school districts starts July 1, three months before the state's, so that cut affected schools' 1980-81 budgets.)

THE LEGISLATURE still must approve a school aid formula for 1980-81, based on such factors as number of students in and state equalized valuation of the district and number of mills levied in property taxes.

The legislature can change the formula, which

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FIRST SUCCESSFUL HUNTER to stop by the Chronicle Saturday morning was Bob Coryell of 6445 Garfield Street. He shot this seven-point at 7:45 a.m., a mile east of Cass City. It was his third buck in 14 years of hunting.

On the inside

General Cable observes 20 years; merchants plan turkey giveaway

This week General Cable is celebrating 20 years in Cass City. The complete information about the company with employees of 20 years featured appears on pages 10 and 11.

The celebration will be concluded with a dinner honoring the 20-year veterans Saturday evening.

Another special event slated for the week end is the annual turkey giveaway sponsored by Cass City merchants. 21 turkeys will be awarded on the basis of drawings to be held in 21 local stores. Details appear on page 13.