

WINNERS OF STATE AND NATIONAL AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

www.hometownlife.com

go
he
scope

l business district
s? How can you
Big Bright Light

s and benefits of the
Authority is at the
ing Dec. 4. The coun-
and the budget for
ure and staff.

meeting, or whether
proved conten-
-taylor Stuart Bikson

Obviously it's a public
id.

r Kristi Trevarrow
eed the DDA board
as pretty clear their
ot yet.

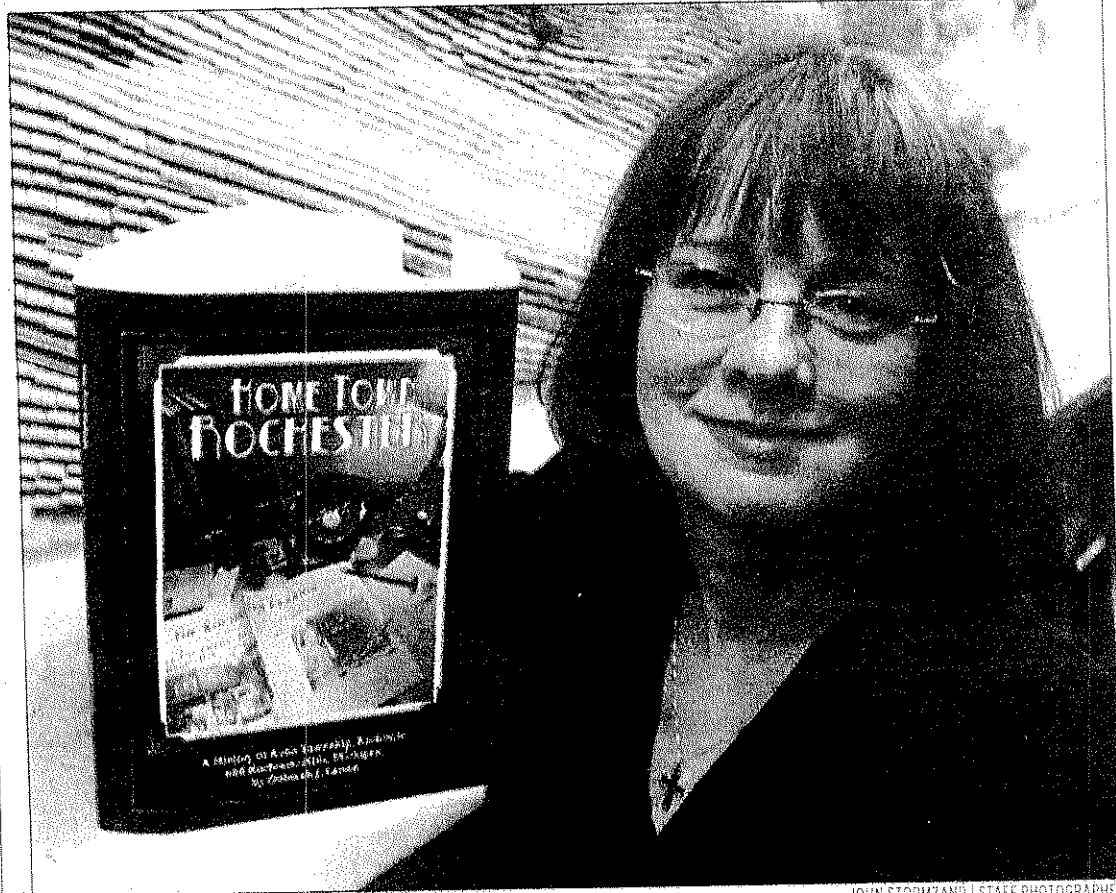
ing." Councilman
oing to be some dis-
ual members of the
eds to have substan-
-containing those dis-

od factual informa-
-sell. "I really think we
our role is."

etting good informa-
-id. "You hit a brick
He said it sounded like
o "cut off discussion."
rated a point he made
rsarial atmosphere
he DDA.

eting without some
not only a mistake of
n," he said. "There's a
s. them situation. It's
mation. I just think it's

has the lead role in the
"We're having a discus-
-due," he said. The goal is
ment's business."



JOHN STORMZANO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Rochester Hills resident Deborah Larsen has penned a new book on the history of the Rochester community. Proceeds will benefit the Rochester-Avon Historical Society.

New book tells Rochester's story

BY GARY WINKELMAN
ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER

A mysterious fire heightens awareness of foreign spies.

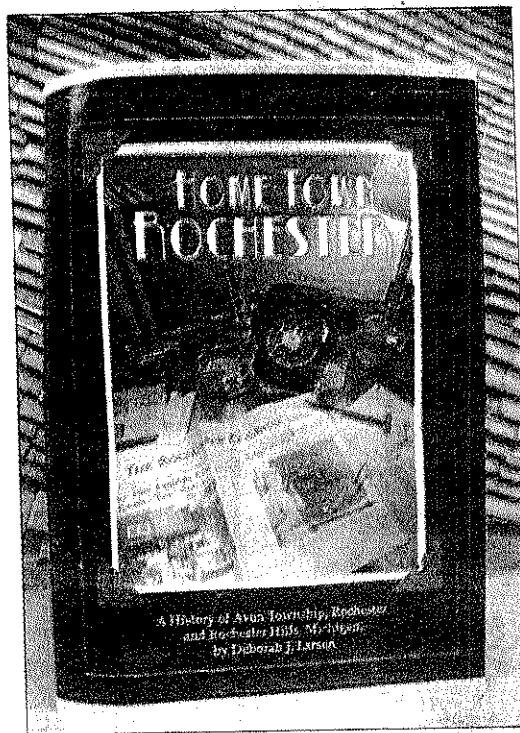
Strange lights in the sky draw the attention of government agents.

No, it's not the plot of a page-turning novel or pitch for a Hollywood thriller but true pieces of Rochester's past, as told in a new book produced by the Rochester-Avon Historical Society.

Written by Rochester Hills resident Deborah Larsen, *Home Town Rochester* was a "labor of love" for the author, a Rochester native who undertook the task after joining the RAHS 2 1/2 years ago. The book, scheduled for release this month, joins *A Lively Town*, published in 1969, as the definitive chronicle of Rochester and Rochester Hills (which was known as Avon Township before becoming a city in 1984).

Larsen's book covers some of the same ground as *A Lively Town*, but where that title focused more on the pioneer era, *Home Town Rochester* concentrates on the communities' 20th century picture.

"The early chapters are more a summation. When we get to the 20th century, we start to get into more detail and talk about how the auto



"Home Town Rochester" covers the area's story from 1817 to the present day.

Please see **BOOK, A4**

'Lipstic
bandit'
caught
crime

BY ANNETTE I
ECCENTRIC ST

A teenager w
himself as the
"lipstic bandit"
by Rochester p
one-man Hallo
wave.

Michael Whi
Rochester was
52-3 District C
since been rele

Detective Pa
said White, wh
previous crimi
was arrested a
of incidents in
a suspect. Poli
believe White
cated at the ti

The first inc
a larceny from
Madison, wh
were stolen. C
at the BP stati
and Universit
was broken in
where a man
ing down the
rying the vict
yelled at him
but she was a
police a descr
design on his

The same n
er car was br
Madison, wh
stick and the
the car's radi
Police again
resident, this
who saw sorr
between hou
suspicious. I
matched the
tion. Arrivin
a glimpse of
he fled. The
screen bent
from a wind
er's house.

Police cha
some apart
Street, wher
arrest.

After his
turned up c
len in the c
Matynka sa

After Wh
up, he made
to police, th
said.

"He used
wrote an ar
a circle wit
Matynka s

seeks economic development strategy



'This is obviously a
subject that can't be

many of you face ... to really look
forward to the future. ... The work
we've done in the last several years
has given us some unique insight into

to attract a younger, highly educated
generation."

Carlisle said he'll challenge the coun-
cil to consider what is the problem,

Road reopens

The ribbon was cut Oct. 30 on the newly reconstructed portion of W. University Drive in Rochester. Congressman Joe Knollenberg and Mayor Stuart Bixson did the honors. The entire stretch of road in the city limits was rebuilt over the last two summers. Others on hand for the ceremony were (from left) the Chicken Shack mascot, Rochester council members Ben Giovanelli, David Zemens, Kim Russell, Jeff Matis and City Manager Jaymes Vettrano.

BOOK

FROM PAGE A1

“That one for the most part has funding,” Shumejko said. He said a public hearing is likely to be scheduled in the spring, at which time the road commission will unveil its plans.

As for Rochester Road, the thoroughfare plan’s authors suggest the city begin reserving right of way for future improvements. It also suggests a series of roundabouts at Auburn, Hamlin and Avon. Roundabouts are considered safer and have similar land and capital costs as traditional intersections, the report says. Alternatively, dual left-turn lanes are suggested.

The entire plan carries a price tag of perhaps \$87 million. That translates to \$3.2 million per year to the city budget alone.

“The biggest issue is the funding,” Shumejko said. “There’s very little dollars competing for many road projects in the county and state. ... I’m really hoping that under the next administration, they’ll fund some sort of public works federally.”

akingsbury@hometownlife.com

industry really transformed us from a farm town into what we are today,” Larsen said. “There’s a lot more information in this book about what went on during World War II and the post-war era and, of course, the establishment of the two cities, where once we had a township and a village.”

WORDS AND PICTURES

Larsen, assistant director of the Mount Clemens Public Library, put her research skills to good use weaving together Rochester’s story. She worked on the project for two years, poring over records of government meetings and reading old editions of local newspapers, including the *Eccentric* as well as the now-defunct *Rochester Era* and *Rochester Clarion*.

“The newspapers, of course, are the most fascinating because it helps you to not only know what happened but how people were reacting to what was happening at the time,” she said.

But because the book’s scope touches on more modern times, the author also was

able to draw upon primary sources for information.

“I called people who were there and said, ‘Tell me about this,’” she said. “It was great getting the first-person (accounts). That’s the nice thing about writing more recent history.”

The book also includes a wealth of photographs that haven’t been widely shared.

“We have great pictures, from 20th century Rochester, Avon Township and Rochester Hills that were contributed by people in the (historical) society,” Larsen said. “Things that haven’t been published before.”

As a third-generation Rochester-area resident, Larsen already had a fondness for the community before becoming immersed in its past. The 1977 Rochester High School graduate said looking back on the past was personally enjoyable and enlightening and she hopes the book will be interesting to a wide audience.

“For the people who have been here for a long time, I hope it will appeal to them because of the great photos that we have. It should bring back some good memories, be kind of a trip down memory lane for them,” she said. “For people who are newer, I hope they will take a look at it and gain an appreciation for the community that we live in, which is really a wonderful place.”

The 108-page book spans original settler James Graham’s 1817 arrival to the unearthing of mastodon

bones at Adams and Hamlin roads in 2006. Larsen’s work, meanwhile, was all voluntary and proceeds from the \$29.95 book will support the efforts of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society.

Rod Wilson, president of the RAHS, said the group has wanted to bring forth a new history book for some time.

“Our community has changed in the last 40 years and this story needs to be told,” he said, adding that Larsen did a wonderful job.

“(The) RAHS knew she had written another book and we were confident of her skills,” he said. “We had six different people proof the book before seeking a printer and they all showered her with accolades for the story she had told.”

Larsen’s first book was a history of Selfridge Field. Her current writing project is on notable women in Macomb County history.

SPIES AND STRANGE LIGHTS

But what about those spies and strange lights in the sky?

Well, those are snippets from some of Larsen’s favorite stories in *Home Town Rochester*.

The former is an account of an October 1917 fire at Parke-Davis, which quickly had newspapers warning people to be on the lookout for torch-bearing saboteurs.

“World War I was going on and the barns were torched one night. It was a definite arson fire ... and a lot of the horses were killed in the process,” Larsen said. “In the following days in the papers all over the state there were these notices that the barns at Parkedale Farm had been torched by apparent German operatives because Parke-Davis was making tetanus anti-serum for the U.S. armed forces and they felt that it was an attempt to undermine the U.S. war effort. And I really never connected that kind of sentiment with little old Rochester.”

Decades later, the community had a brush with “the UFO hysteria going on” in the 1960s.

“Project Blue Book did do a couple of investigations in Rochester,” Larsen said, “but I found an interesting one on the front page of the *Clarion* which talked about these mysterious lights that many people had seen over town for several nights.”

Alas, it turned out these flying saucers were little more than cleverly launched candles that sparked a short collective spook.

“Bob Werth, the police chief, found one the remnants of one of the mysterious lights up in

CITY OF ROCHESTER Mount Avon Cemetery Fall Clean-up

All floral arrangements, decorations, and displays (summer or winter) are to be removed from grave sites at Mount Avon Cemetery by Tuesday, November 18. The fall cemetery clean-up will occur on Wednesday and Thursday, November 19 & 20.

Winter decorations may be placed beginning Friday, November 21.

Publish: November 13, 2008

0E06631796 - 2x1

If you're insured by one of these companies, we can save you money and peace of mind.



State Farm
Allstate
AAA
Farmers
Nationwide
Liberty Mutual
MEEMIC
USAA

**CITY OF ROCHESTER
Mount Avon Cemetery Fall Clean-up**

All floral arrangements, decorations, and displays (summer or winter) are to be removed from grave sites at Mount Avon Cemetery by Tuesday, November 18. The fall cemetery clean-up will occur on Wednesday and Thursday, November 19 & 20.

Winter decorations may be placed beginning Friday, November 21.

Publish: November 13, 2008

0509031795 - 2x15

If you're insured by one of these companies, we can save you money and peace of mind.



- State Farm
- Allstate
- AAA
- Farmers
- Nationwide
- Liberty Mutual
- MEEMIC
- USAA
- MI Farm Bureau

Call today to find out how you can save on the coverage you need when you switch from your current insurance company to one of the top Michigan insurers. Plus you'll still get the expertise, trustworthy advice, and personal service that only an independent agent can deliver.

Call (248) 377-9600 today for a free quote and consultation.

Expert advice. Unbeatable value. Only from an independent agent.

An Oakland County Based Company for 45 Years.



691 N. Squirrel Road, Ste. 190
Auburn Hills, MI 48321
(248) 377-9600

www.hartlandinsurancegroup.com

back some good memories, be kind of a trip down memory lane for them," she said. "For people who are newer, I hope they will take a look at it and gain an appreciation for the community that we live in, which is really a wonderful place."

The 108-page book spans original settler James Graham's 1817 arrival to the unearthing of mastodon

The former is an account of an October 1917 fire at Parkedale Farm, which quickly had newspapers warning people to be on the lookout for torch-bearing saboteurs.

"World War I was going on and the barns were torched one night. It was a definite arson fire ... and a lot of the horses were killed in the process," Larsen said. "In the following days in the papers all over the state there were these notices that the barns at Parkedale Farm had been torched by apparent German operatives because Parkedale Farm was making tetanus anti-serum for the U.S. armed forces and they felt that it was an attempt to undermine the U.S. war effort. And I really never connected that kind of sentiment with little old Rochester."

Decades later, the community had a brush with "the UFO hysteria going on" in the 1960s.

"Project Blue Book did do a couple of investigations in Rochester," Larsen said, "but I found an interesting one on the front page of the *Clanton* which talked about these mysterious lights that many people had seen over town for several nights."

Alas, it turned out these flying saucers were little more than cleverly launched candles that sparked a short collective

"Bob Werth, the police chief, found one of the remnants of one of the mysterious lights up in the cemetery," Larsen said.

"Some prankster was putting together these little hot-air balloons ... and setting them aloft over town. That was kind of cute hoax, but it scared a lot of people at the time because of the hysteria that was going on."

Home Town Rochester is scheduled to be available in mid-November. It will initially be available at Lytle Pharmacy and the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm.

gwinkelman@hometownlife.com
(248) 901-2547