



New undergraduates more job-focused

The number of senior high school pupils entering the country's universities, technical colleges (TEI) and other tertiary education institutions increased this year with a marked shift toward vocation-oriented studies, underlining an increased sense of insecurity among graduates in an increasingly tough job market.

Of the 92,426 senior high school pupils who sat university entrance examinations earlier this summer, 68,794 garnered a place for themselves in a tertiary education institution, up 4.4 percent from last year's 68,224 places.

A closer analysis of the exam results revealed an increased interest in colleges offering a greater likelihood of employment on graduation. Teacher-training courses for primary schools and kindergartens attracted more candidates than usual following the creation of new posts at schools across the country. But there was a drop in school leavers' interest in information technology courses, seen as a reaction to a saturated job market, and a significantly reduced interest in the police force's cadet school, reflecting fears about heightened risks associated with the police officer's job following last December's riots in Athens. It was also clear that an increasing number of school leavers are unwilling to pursue higher education in the provinces with many technical colleges left with half-empty courses. The TEI of Western Macedonia, based in Kozani, tops the list with 1,625 undergraduate course places empty.

Palm Harbor couple in murder-suicide had health problems

PALM HARBOR — A Palm Harbor man shot his wife, then turned the gun on himself, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office authorities said Wednesday in confirming a murder-suicide.

The elderly couple were found dead about 10 p.m. Monday by their adult son, who went to his parents' home at 2059 Sandpiper Drive to check on them.

John and Dorothy Aloizakis, both 86, were both "in declining health," said sheriff's spokeswoman Marianne Pasha.

Investigators did not find a suicide note, Pasha said.

It's not Mac time now

ROCKDALE Council has refused two applications for 24-hour trading by McDonald's restaurants in Bexley and Rockdale, to the relief of residents concerned about rubbish and antisocial behaviour in the area.

McDonald's had applied for extended trading, seven days a week, for restaurants and drive-throughs at Princes Highway, Rockdale and Forest Road, Bexley. The Rockdale restaurant already has a 24-hour drive-through.

A McDonald's spokeswoman said the corporation had not yet been notified by the council of the outcome of either application and until then it "would be inappropriate for us to comment".

The spokeswoman previously told the Leader that McDonald's developed a security management plan for both applications and strict litter-patrol procedures were in place to ensure the restaurant, car park and surrounding streets were as "litter free as



Taking a stand: Rockdale Mayor Bill Saravinovski (far right) and Councillor Angelo Anestis (far left) with Bexley residents who objected to an application for 24-hour trading by McDonald's. The council rejected the application. Picture: John Veage

possible"

Bexley resident Elle Gerasimou said she and many others were concerned rubbish, loitering youths, noise and traffic problems would be exacerbated if the restaurant at the corner of Forest Road and Highworth Avenue traded longer. Ms Gerasimou said residents were fed up with youths congregating in the restaurant car park and surrounding streets, throwing rubbish out of their cars and swearing at elderly residents. She said residents frequently told young people to keep quiet or move

on. She said at least three residents had property vandalised, including smashed front windows and letterboxes. A parked car was also smashed into by another vehicle whose driver fled.

"I've had P-platers throw rubbish on the ground in front of me. It's a constant amount we have to pick up. I've even found empty packets of drugs thrown in my garden," Ms Gerasimou said.

"We have punch ups outside our houses, wheel spinning, donuts in the street. I don't think they would want them congregating there and having parties."

Bexley resident Christopher Beavis said these were "ongoing problems" that at least would not be aggravated.

"They [McDonald's] promote themselves as a family restaurant. It's a contradiction, 24 hour trading is not for families."

"McGreedy"?

Rockdale Mayor Bill Saravinovski said that while McDonald's was a "good corporate citizen" that supported charities, these applications were driven by "pure greed".

Cr Saravinovski said it was a victory for the more than 130 residents of both suburbs who signed petitions opposing the extended hours.

"A normal person would not go out and buy a hamburger at 4am," Cr Saravinovski said.

"The issues raised by residents were spot on. How would they [McDonald's] feel with rubbish and cars going up and down the street 24 hours?"

"We have taken a strong stance against hoons in the past few years. All it would do is give an opportunity for antisocial behaviour to occur."

Ancient theatre puts end to 2,300 years of silence

The last time a performance was held at the Ancient Theater of Maroneia was 23 centuries ago. This unusually long hiatus will end this Saturday, with actress Lydia Koniordou's interpretation of Euripides monologues, in a performance directed by Thodoris Gonis.

Only 200 spectators will have the opportunity to attend the show that will inaugurate this new phase for the theater, which comes after extensive restoration works.

Situated next to the village of Maroneia in Rodopi prefecture, the

theater has become once more accessible thanks to the work of the 19th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (EPKA). The Lydia Koniordou performance is a celebratory event. But, according to ephorate archaeologist Chryssa Karadima, the 19th EPKA hopes that in the future, once research and work on the monument has been completed, the theater will be able to host events on a regular basis.

Karadima has been responsible for the excavation since 2000, the year that the last phase of the works began.

Excavations had started in 1981 but were then interrupted in 1994. The theater though had been known to the wider public already from the early 20th century, when some of its construction material was used to build the Maroneia primary school.

The Maroneia Theater had been in continuous use from the Hellenistic period up to the 4th century AD. During Early Christian times its use was limited. This was also the last phase in the use of the theater, which was then abandoned and turned into a cemetery.

According to Karadima, the restoration corresponds to the theater's Roman phase, which is the best preserved one. The theater's parapet and openings to the stage have been restored; the seats were reset and completed, while the stage itself was restored to the surface level it had in Roman times.

The restoration of the monument was carried out with the support of the Diazoma association, whose aim is to research and highlight ancient Greek theaters, starting with that of Sicyon.

