

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2004

## Mitey fun sport

### Little hockey players make big strides

Grand Traverse Hockey Association offers a variety of skating opportunities for youth 4-19 years old.

New skaters born between 1995 and 1999 begin their hockey in the Initiation Program.

New skaters born between July 1, 1985 and December 31, 1994, begin in the Development Hockey Program. Geared toward older skaters, this program is designed to prepare players for team hockey.

Girls who wish to play hockey start out in the Initiation Program or Development Hockey depending on their age. Usually, girls play coed hockey until they are at the Pee Wee level (11 years old). They can then continue playing on a coed team or join a girl's team.

Skaters have the opportunity to play hockey at the Squirt, Pee Wee, Bantam and Midget levels. House teams are drafted during a series of skates in September. Teams are announced at Parent/Player meetings the last weeks of September. Travel tryouts are held the first week of August.



Mite A players are generally ages 4-7 years old in their first year of hockey, and for some, their first time on skates. During a typical practice, players break up into small groups to work on fundamental skills, such as diving for the puck.



Herald photos by Garret Leiva

Right: Alex Cutler, 6, gets some help from his dad Mike as he suits up for Mite A practice at Howe Arena. Far right: Grand Traverse Hockey Association Mite A players practice at Howe Arena Sunday afternoon. Each one-hour practice session ends with a fun game like Cross Ice Hockey, British Bulldog, tag a coach, or using skating skills to race a hockey net to center ice.



Above: Head coach Tom Klavon and his staff work with Mite players on fundamental skills utilizing the USA Hockey Cross Ice Program. The program encourages a non-competitive environment in which young players learn the basic skills with increased opportunities to touch and handle the puck. Left: A player takes a shot on goal during a Mite A practice session at Howe Arena. While many young players take a whack at the art of slap shots, most just try to master staying up on their skates.



## TC HAPPENINGS

*Things to do, places to go, people to see*

### Poetry night

Enjoy a winter evening of poetry reading by Dunes Review writers at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Horizon Books, 243 E. Front St. For more information, call 946-7290 or (800) 587-2147.

### Spice up the weekend

Area restaurant chefs will compete for top awards during the 10th annual Downtown Chili Cook-Off from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the Holiday Inn West Bay. Chili lovers can sample eight chilies for \$8 or single bowls of their favorites for \$5. For more information, call 922-2050.

### Music to the ears

Enjoy learning how sounds are produced by attending the program, "The Physics of Music," as explained by Tom Kauffman and David Chown at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Traverse Area District Library, 610 Woodmere St. For more information, call 932-8500.