



oakland county employees

# Telegraph

winter 2000

## Employee Achievements Highlighted in State of the County 2000



More than 300 people jammed into the auditorium of the Michigan State University Management Conference Center on the evening of Thursday, February 17, 2000, to hear Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson deliver his 6th State of the County Address and the first of the new millennium.

During his 45 minute speech, which was complemented by visual images of the subjects he talked about projected on a large screen behind him, Mr. Patterson covered a wide range of topics, everything from the county's

program to install 330 miles of fiber optic cable to enhance the flow of information between local units of government to the improvements being made in the crime-fighting network known as CLEMIS to updates on Automation Alley, the Business Roundtable and GIS, etc.

But Mr. Patterson also devoted a good deal of his time to reciting the many accomplishments of county departments in the past year while also singling out two employees for recognition because of service above and beyond the call of duty.

see EMPLOYEES, page 8

## Little Folks for Little Oaks



see story  
on page 8

Toddlers enjoy a ride at Little Oaks.

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# PATTERSON / Person to Person

Over the years, Oakland County has established itself as a recognized leader among local units of government in developing and implementing innovative programs that benefit our employees. In the past, we have initiated a Deferred Retirement Buyout Plan and a Defined Contribution Plan. We have also increased the number of personal computers in use across county government from less than 200 in 1993 to more than 4,000 today and some of those (about 1,600) have already been replaced because they were not Y2K compliant.

A new Child Care Center, which we call Little Oaks, opened last month to the first 52 customers. It is our

hope that Little Oaks will help us retain and attract talented people in this more competitively charged labor market.

In an effort to push the envelope even further in making county government more family-friendly and the kind of place where people will want to work, I have proposed that the county contribute a maximum of \$25 per month to the Deferred Compensation account of every county employee enrolled in the program. The added cushion of financial security will make it easier for our employees to save for their children's college education or provide additional funds for a more enjoyable retirement.

Only seven states and two local units of government nationally have offered a supplemental savings plan like this to their employees. If implemented here, Oakland County would become the first county in the state of Michigan to provide employees with this kind of program which allows them to set aside a few extra dollars for the future.

Saving for the future is always a challenge and if this new benefit can assist in making the task a little easier, then it will have achieved its purpose. Our dedicated and hardworking employees have earned and deserve no less.



**L. Brooks Patterson**  
Oakland County Executive

## Honors Ceremony for Commissioners

by Sheryl Mitchell, Administrative Analyst, Board Commissioners

The December 16, 1999 Board of Commissioners meeting, the last meeting of this millennium, provided a unique opportunity for Commissioners - past and present - to meet and reflect upon the accomplishments of the past 25 years during a special Honors Ceremony. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, Chairperson John P. McCulloch recognized and thanked former Commissioners for their contributions to the success of Oakland County. Attending the ceremony were over 30 former Commissioners who have served since the first meeting was called to order by the late Lynn D. Allen.

McCulloch remarked that, "As we embark on our last meeting of 1999, we want to take this opportunity to look back to see how we arrived at where we are, and to thank those who have made it possible." The following are excerpts from his speech:

"In 1969, the first Board of Commissioners' meeting was called to order by Lynn D. Allen, and the invocation was given by Dennis Aaron. All 27 Commissioners were present. That was a very turbulent year, a historical year, as the newly reapportioned 'one-man/one-vote board' charted a new course for Oakland County.

Current Commissioners should note that meeting began with a motion to approve board rules which was defeated, and it took three votes to get the agenda approved. But this new board

worked hard to establish itself, and set many precedents which are still followed today. During that year, with the help of corporate donations, the county purchased a helicopter, applied for and received federal grants for the purchase of Addison Oaks, made plans for the county's sesquicentennial celebration in 1970 and adopted a \$30 million budget for 1970.

By 1980, the County's budget was \$88 million, and by 1990, \$295 million, to 1999's \$307 million which demonstrates Oakland County's unprecedented growth. growth which is nurtured by strong roots.

Our official actions today will be to take care of current business and to plan for the future - a future which is very bright - a future which is the legacy of all of those who have served this county."

The Honors Ceremony concluded with the Board of Commissioners presenting their former colleagues with Proclamations recognizing the outstanding contributions as our Commissioners Emeriti. The heartwarming reunion included the presentation of colors from Sergeant Parker and the Sheriff's Department Honor Guard followed by a holiday brunch prepared by Oak Management, which was enjoyed by all who attended.



# Fun, generosity and surprises highlight Annual Employees Holiday Party

The last thing on anyone's mind December 10 was work as more than 300 party-hearty individuals packed the banquet room at the Northfield Hilton in Troy to celebrate the holiday season. The Annual Oakland County Employees Holiday party featured great food, wonderful music, scintillating conversation, heartwarming generosity and more than a few surprises. One of the exciting highlights of the day was Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson's announcement of the grand prize winners in the Employee Suggestion Program.

Mr. Patterson presented the 3rd place winner, Mary Mansch of the Prosecutor's Office, with a trip to Toronto or the \$750 cash equivalent. Mansch won by coming up with a way to bypass two of the six steps now required by the state when calculating sentencing guidelines. Her suggestion will save an estimated \$3,688.

Walking away with the second place prize of a trip to Cancun or the \$2,000 cash equivalent was Randall Smithling of Support Services. His idea to recycle used tires that can no longer be used will save the County approximately \$5,220.

Mr. Patterson handed out the first place prize of a trip to Hawaii or the \$4,000 cash equivalent to Judy Fandale of the Personnel Department. Fandale came up with the idea of changing the rate table for benefits to reflect the actual dollar amount owed by the County and the employee. Her suggestion will save an estimated \$24,189 while also improving efficiency and reducing the time it takes staff to make corrections.

Winning the \$500 cash awards were: Ida Sue Kersey, Children's Village, who suggested including three-in-one soap and fabric softener when purchasing laundry supplies; Kimberly Osterkamp, Probate Court, for her idea to produce an educational video aimed at deterring juvenile offenders; Jeanie Kolb, Clerk/Register,



**Left to right:** Mike Worrell, Jordie Kramer, Randy Smithling, Ida Sue Kersey, Barb Puckett, Lynn McDaniels, Jeanie Kolb, Mary Mansch, Kimberly Osterkamp, Ethel Baker, Brooks Patterson, Judy Fandale

who suggested mailing Board of Commissioner meeting agendas and minutes and Barb Puckett, Health Division, for her suggestion relative to processing South Office mail.

In the random drawing for the \$250 cash prizes the winners were: Kathleen Christ, Pretrial Services, for making a suggestion relative to Oakland Pointe parking lot signage; Ethel Baker, Personnel, who suggested a drop box for the Personnel Department; Karin Hopkins, Health, who suggested sending out an interdepartmental pre-auction notice and Lynn McDaniel, Health, who suggested creating an online furniture list.

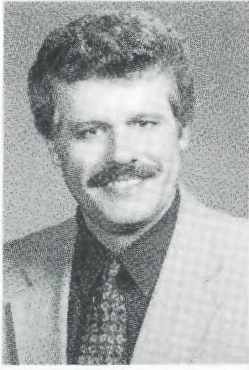
It should be pointed out that no taxpayer dollars are used to fund the ESP prizes. The money comes entirely from the County Executive's Annual Summer Golf Outing. Since the program began seven years ago, the suggestions submitted by employees and implemented have saved the County more than \$3 million.

Another important part of the holiday program was the distribution of checks from the Casual Day Fund to eleven worthy

charities and organizations. A total of \$32,000 was handed out this year bringing to more than \$165,000 the amount of money distributed since the program began in 1993. Those organizations receiving Casual Day funds included: HAVEN, Give-A-Christmas Fund, Pontiac Rescue Mission, Children's Village, Community Services of Oakland, Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County (Care House), North Oakland Medical Center Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, Leader Dog for the Blind, Greater Pontiac Community Coalition, Koats for Kids and Vietnam Veterans of America Oakland County Chapter 133.

In addition to the \$10,000 contributed to HAVEN by County employees, Mr. Patterson also presented an additional \$95,000 to the shelter for abused women and children donated by Lear Corporation, the Rhoda Burke Andrews Foundation, Plastic Engineering and Technical Services, Inc. and an anonymous donor. The money will help HAVEN rebuild its Pontiac shelter which was gutted by fire in November.





**Bob Dustman**  
Media and  
Communications

## The View from Here

If you've never visited that city by the bay - San Francisco - you should make it a point to do so sometime in the near future. It's a very beautiful and unique city which boasts a moderate climate pretty much year around.

My wife and I were there in January to visit friends we first met on our trip to Europe a couple of years ago. They live in a condo right in San Francisco, five minutes from everything worth seeing or doing. From their window in the living room you can see Sausalito, Oakland and a corner of the Golden Gate Bridge. The city is very eclectic, a virtual melting pot of different life styles, different cultures and the ever present street people and street performers. The sixties are still very much alive and well in Haight Ashbury and Chinatown is wall-to-wall with shoppers looking for bargains.

Traveling the streets of San Francisco is a little like being on a ride at Cedar Point. You drive a stick shift at your own peril because many of the streets resemble mini-mountains that almost go straight up and straight down. Parking is at a premium most days and four-way stops seem to be more prevalent than traffic signals, which makes driving a rather interesting experience. As a result, there is an element of trust and awareness involved in motoring around the city.

Two of the nights we were there, our hosts took us out to dinner in the Mission District, which has a reputation for not being one of the nicer parts of town. But the area is going through somewhat of a renaissance with new businesses and restaurants opening up in the area and young professional people moving in. The transformation is not quite complete, so it's still a good idea to be aware of your surroundings.

I not only "left my heart in San Francisco," I also left a good chunk of my bank account there as well. Because our hosts, Dick and Pat Golomb, had treated us to such a good time, we thought it only fitting to pick up the tab for dinner Saturday night. Talk about sticker shock.

When the bill came, they almost had to call the paramedics to revive me. Oh well, who needs to buy groceries anyway and the mortgage company probably won't mind if we miss a payment or two. But then no one held a gun to my head either and told me I had to order two bottles of expensive

wine. I was just reciprocating what Dick had done the night before when he bought our dinner. You know, when in Rome . . . The funny thing is I don't even like wine all that much, but it was either that or water since neither restaurant offered cocktails. In fact, many of the dining places only offer wine and sometimes beer.

Saturday was a beautiful day - sunny skies and temperatures in the upper 50s, so we hopped a ferry for the seven minute ride to Alcatraz - Al Capone's home away from home. Prior to becoming a federal prison, Alcatraz was a military base. The prison, like the city, sits on hills and uneven terrain, so if you go there take along comfortable walking shoes. Alcatraz has a fascinating history and it was interesting to learn about all the colorful characters who were inmates, the various escape attempts and the shootout that claimed the lives of several prisoners who were killed when they tried to take guards hostage. You can still see the bullet holes in the walls.

After returning from Alcatraz, we spent a couple of hours touring Fisherman's Wharf, which is replete with shops, restaurants and all kinds of street performers from mimes to female impersonators.

Sunday was spent driving through Chinatown, which took a while since it was the start of the Chinese New Year festivities and Japantown which is smaller and much less congested. Our hosts also showed us Lombard Street, which is the crookedest street in America, maybe even the world. If you were to scribble a zigzag on a piece of paper, that would be Lombard Street which winds down from the top of a hill to the bottom with cars inching along much like water trickling down a mountain stream. There are also houses on either side of the street with no space for parking, so visitors either have to be dropped off in front or walk. Quite unusual.

Anyway, Monday came all too quickly, which meant we were headed back to the snow and cold of Michigan.

San Francisco is a great city, teeming with excitement, culture, some of the finest restaurants anywhere and a rich mix of people from all over the world. But frankly, I prefer it right here. As Dorothy said in the Wizard of Oz - "There's no place like home."



# Patchan's Green Thumb Given a Thumbs Up!



**Greg Patchan**

For 28 years now, Greg Patchan, horticultural agent/MSU Extension, has been dispensing valuable advice to literally thousands of people on how to care for their plants and lawns as well as how to fight those pesky destructive minded insects. Recently, Patchan's photo turned up on the cover of the January 2000 edition of the Land Sculptor Magazine. Inside were pictures of Patchan receiving the 1999 President's Award from the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association at the group's Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Banquet.

"It is truly humbling when an organization of 600 business members compliment and rec-

ognize you for your years of service," Patchan said. "It is one thing to have your employer's recognition, but it is far more rewarding when the public you serve recognizes you for what you've done for them."

Patchan was honored by the association for his dedication in working with businesses and the public on a wide range of scientific, educational matters relating to plants, landscaping, soil, nutrients, propagation and insects.

"This award spans many years of outstanding service to the landscape industry of Oakland County and the metropolitan area," said Dr. Wayne Nierman, who is director of MSU

Extension and Patchan's boss. "Greg is a regular contributor of business and technical articles for the association's monthly member publication as well as being an instructor and resource person for the many educational events sponsored by the Landscape Association and MSU Extension."

When he's not helping people deal with a variety of horticultural problems, Patchan likes to spend time pursuing his other interests, which include photography and computers.

Patchan and his wife, Carol, live in Waterford Township and they have a daughter who is completing her medical internship in Tucson, Arizona.

## Mail Room Worker Prowls the Lions Sidelines



Jim Wright is pictured in the back row, second from the left.

For longer than the Detroit Lions have played their home games at the Pontiac Silverdome, Jim Wright has been a fixture on the sidelines. Wright, who has worked in the Mail Room for the past six years delivering letters and packages to Parks and Recreation, the Drain Office and other buildings on the north route, handles the front stick on the chain crew during the first half of all Lions home games and the rear stick in the second half.

"Years ago, I ran into someone who knew somebody with the Lions and it just happened they had a vacancy they needed to fill, so I got the job," Wright said.

Wright was on the sidelines in 1971 when Lions wide receiver Chuck Hughes collapsed and died on the field during a game with the Chicago Bears. He also witnessed the devastating career-ending injuries experienced by Lions Mike Utley and Reggie Brown

Wright has also heard some interesting verbal exchanges between players and coaches on the sidelines. Wright said its not all that unusual for a coach to tell a player who isn't performing up to par - "get you're a\_\_ in gear or you're out of here." Wright said Bobby Ross is a good one for chewing out his players, while Wayne Fontes wasn't adverse to going after officials he thought made a bad or questionable call.

"This year during the Lions skid in the second half of the season, there was a lot of tension on the sidelines and in the locker room," Wright noted. "There was a lot of finger pointing and blaming."

From Wright's perspective, Joe Schmidt was the best coach the Lions ever had because he was a people person. Wright said Schmidt treated everyone with respect, even if you weren't a player.

Analyzing the just concluded season, Wright says with Barry Sanders gone, the Lions really didn't have a running game and Sanders' replacement Ron Rivers was hampered by injuries. With all the problems the Lions faced, Wright is surprised they won eight games.

Looking back on his career as a member of the Lions chain crew, Wright considers the 1982 Super Bowl at the Silverdome, which he worked, and the game Barry Sanders hit 2,000 yards for the season as highlights. Will he continue working the sidelines in the future?

"I'd like to stay with them as long as they're at the Silverdome, but it would be a long haul for late games at the new stadium," Wright says.

Jim and his wife, Judy, have been married for 36 years and live in Oakland Township.



# Farewell to a Fallen Comrade

by Dan Lambrix, Oakland County Sheriff's Department

It is a warm sunny Saturday afternoon with children playing in the park, neighbors talking and a dog chasing a cat across the street. A police car on patrol drives down the street and stops at the corner. Two men are talking at the corner, when the officer says "Hi, how are you doing this fine day?" Bang, bang! Life will never be the same again for thousands of people.

The day was June 17, 1994 and the man whose life ended on that street corner was Kenneth Woodmore. He worked for the Oakland County Sheriff's Department for a short while, and then for the Michigan State Police. His brothers were police officers and he wanted so much to follow in their footsteps. Bang, bang!

At the Police Olympics he won all the track and field events, taking home 10 gold medals. In bowling, he could only bring home the silver. I won the gold. In basketball and softball he brought home more gold. Not once, not twice, but three years in a row he won most of the gold medals. Bang, bang!

He was humble and he loved life and people and had this big old smile that could melt butter. He would always say good morning and if you were feeling down, would say just the right thing to pick up your spirits. You could tell by talking to him that he loved law enforcement and that he wanted more, like catching a purse snatcher, cracking a murder case, or finding a lost child. Bang, bang!

His bulletproof vest stopped most of the shots but one managed to sneak under his arm and through the unprotected part into

his ribs, and pierce the biggest heart that I've even known. Bang, bang! Time of death, 2 p.m.

There were hundreds of family and friends at the funeral. More than 500 police officers from Canada and the United States came to pay their respects to a fallen comrade, a brother in blue. His neighbors, his friends, his wife, his children, his relatives, his co-workers, other police officers; his death affected thousands of people. No more bangs, the gun is empty.

At the funeral, when it was my turn to say good-bye, I put my gold medal from bowling in his hand. I gave him a big smile, the biggest smile that I could muster and said, take home all the gold Kenny - take home all the gold. Because that is how Kenny would have wanted it. He lived life to the fullest, and held nothing back. He did the best that he could and left a piece of himself with every person whom he met.

I don't know who wrote the following, but it says it all:

## Policeman's Prayer

*Dear Lord be with me on my beat,  
This day and every day.  
Grant that each weary block I drive,  
May ease a brother's way.  
Let me be kindly to the old,  
And to the young be strong,  
But let me triumph over those  
Whose acts are cruel or wrong.  
And if according to your plan,  
If I am to lose my life,  
Please bless with your protecting hand,  
My children and my wife!*

I want to do just that. On May 20th and 21st, I'm hosting a bowling tournament to benefit MI-COPS, an organization that helps with the grieving process. They see to it that spouses and children of police officers killed in the line of duty go to college for free. It's only \$20 to bowl and 100% of the proceeds go to MI-COPS. Please circle those dates on your calendar and bring a friend or 2 or 10. You can bowl at 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Saturday or 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. on Sunday. There is prize money, raffles, a sports memorabilia auction, celebrities and much more.

Support the men in blue who risk their lives everyday to keep the streets safe for you and me. Fifteen police officers in Michigan have been killed in the line of duty since Kenny and I'm sad to report that one was killed today as I write this article. Gary Priess of DeWitt Township was killed during a routine traffic stop just outside of Lansing. He had a wife and two children who are now grieving.

For a bowling tournament application or for further information, call 1-877-4MI-COPS or visit the MI-COPS web page at [www.mi-cops.org](http://www.mi-cops.org). You may also send your name, address, phone number and a check for \$20 made out to MI-COPS and send it to P.O. Box 549, Dimondale, MI 48821. Please include your highest average over the last 3 years. The bowling tournament will be at Continental Lanes, 13 Mile and Gratiot in Roseville. Be sure to pick a date and time and send it by May 10th. Thank you for your concern and God bless.

## Bounty Program speeds up payment for referrals

Enterprising Oakland County employees participating in the County Bounty Program can now expect to see a quicker payoff when referring someone for employment who is eventually hired.

In the past, the person making the referral had to wait until the new employee completed a six-month probationary period before receiving payment.

But the rules have been changed to allow immediate payment once the new employee is put on the payroll.

Additional details on the bonus program can be found on the "O" drive under Personnel.

County Bounties are being paid on the following hard to fill positions:

- \* Applications Analyst Programmer (any level) \$1,500
- \* Assistant Chief Engineer (any specialty) \$1,000
- \* Sewage Treatment Plant Operator I - \$1,000
- \* Maintenance Labor - Drain - \$500

Oakland County's Youth Assistance Mentors Plus program, a part of the Family Division of Probate/Circuit Court, is in need of volunteers to become mentors. The program offers you the opportunity to serve as a friend and role model for a young person at risk. Just a few hours of your time each week could make a huge difference in a child's life. Stop now and take a few minutes to give us a call and find out more about this wonderful program. For more information on how to volunteer, please call Deb Lindsey, 858-0099 or Candy Hlivka, 858-0045.



# Teen Burper Breaks Record



For 18 year old Jonathan Oesch, his fifteen minutes of fame came one day last year when he burped his way into the Guinness Book of World Records. Jonathan, the son of Robyn Oesch who works for Fiscal Services and David Oesch, a sheriff's deputy, got word last October that the Guinness people were looking for him. Seems they heard that Jonathan had won a burping contest at the 4H Fair in Davisburg and they wanted to know if he might be interested in making his mark on history.

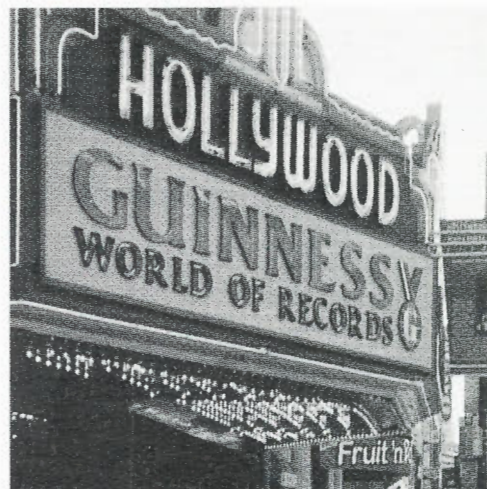
What 18 year old would pass up a free trip to Hollywood to appear on a network television show and get a shot at immortality - well, maybe notoriety, as the world champion of burping? It's not everyday you get a chance to make it into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Upon arriving in Tinsel Town, Jonathan and his mom were given the red carpet treatment which included a limo ride from the airport to their lavish hotel and three nights free lodging.

"Jonathan went out there with the idea of just having a good time," said Robyn Oesch. "The other contestants took the whole thing a lot more seriously."

Speaking of competitors, Jonathan was matched up against a female graduate student from New York who transcribes French literature into English and a male oral surgeon from San Diego who has a CD out that features burping Christmas carols (the perfect gift for that someone very special).

When the time came to display his unique talent, Jonathan came away the decisive winner with a burp that sent shock waves down Hollywood and Vine. His burp hit the top end of the decimeter, catapulting him into the



2001 edition of the Guinness Book of World Records. Not bad for a young Eagle Scout from White Lake, Michigan.

"Who knows where this all might lead," says Mom. "Maybe the Gap will want him to model their jeans. "Maybe - but it's more likely Jonathan will get an offer to do commercials for Gas-X or Alka Seltzer.

Jonathan will return to California this year to defend his title.

## Ivory Coast seeks Health Division's Help in Fighting AIDS

A top government official from the Ivory Coast made it a point to stop off in Oakland County during his tour of the United States to seek advice on how to deal with an AIDS epidemic that is killing scores of his fellow countrymen.

During his brief visit, Mohammed Abou Diakite sat down with Joy Schumacher, the Health Division's AIDS/HIV Coordinator and others, to discuss the pervasive problem threatening to wipe out some of the Ivory Coast's most important leaders.

"He shared with us problems in his country which include a prohibition against the distribution of condoms because of the Ivory Coast's religious orientation as a Moslem country," Schumacher said.

Schumacher put together a community meeting at the Health Division and invited local people to give Mr. Diakite their perspective on the issue of AIDS. The discussion centered on what Oakland County could do to help the continent of Africa, where the Ivory Coast is located, deal with the killer disease that has robbed the country of their most productive members and left more than ten million AIDS orphans on the streets.

"Across much of Africa, one in four people are dying from AIDS, many of them doctors, lawyers and engineers," Schumacher said. "It will take generations before newly educated people can take their place."

Schumacher says she stressed to Mr. Diakite the importance of involving community leaders in the decision making process and also in getting religious leaders to confront the AIDS epidemic realistically, instead of trying to ignore it.

"Even though AIDS is a reality and people are dying from it, the illness is still viewed as shameful by the religious community in the Ivory Coast and the rest of Africa," Schumacher. "The cultural mores are playing a big role in the epidemic because nobody over there wants to talk about AIDS."



# Little Folks for Little Oaks

by Judy Eaton, Director of the Personnel Department

LITTLE OAKS, Oakland County's on-site child care center, opened its doors for Phase I of the center on January 18. The opening represents the achievement of L. Brooks Patterson's vision to provide on-site child care for employees. Supported by the Board of Commissioners and the Child Care Task Force (a representative group of eighteen individuals from elected official areas and county departments/divisions) on-site child care is now a reality.

The center currently accommodates 52 children from ages 6 weeks through 5 years. When Phase II opens this summer, the center will house a total of 108 children. Enrollment slots for both Phase I and Phase II are still available. Contact the center's director, Karen Paulos, at 858-2080 for enrollment information.

Located in the center of the county campus, LITTLE OAKS is easily accessible for many county employees. Jordie Kramer, whose son Andrew is enrolled in the center, says "I can't believe what a difference it makes in my morning. I drop Andrew off at the center and I'm at my desk just a few minutes later. I have at least another 30 minutes to an hour extra each day now."

Lunch time is fun for parents, too. Sue Dignard, from the Health Division, has lunch with her son almost every day. LITTLE OAKS welcomes parents to the center at all times. According to Sue, "Adam either comes back to my building's lunch room or I bring my lunch to the center and eat with him there. Sometimes we splurge and go out. It's very comforting to be this close to him during the day and to be able to spend quality time with him on my lunch hour."

The center is managed and operated by Bright Horizons, the leading provider of employer sponsored child care in the nation. Bright Horizons operates over 270 centers throughout the country. Known for its emphasis on high quality child care, all of the centers operated by Bright Horizons are accredited or in the process of being accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The association has strict standards which focus on improving and identifying high quality programs. Centers must be open for one year before they can apply. Part of Oakland County's contract with Bright Horizons requires that the center be NAEYC accredited as soon as it is eligible. Currently, less than 20 child care facilities in Oakland County are NAEYC accredited.

LITTLE OAKS was designed and constructed by Oakland County's Department of Facilities Management, in conjunction with local contractors, architects and experts from Bright Horizons. The facility is light and cheery and incorporates state-of-the-art electronic card readers, computer controlled HVAC for optimum comfort, and full sprinkler and fire alarm systems. Security is stressed, with parents receiving identification swipe cards which allow access to the center. Phase I consisted of the renovation of an existing ranch style building on campus. Parents have been delighted and impressed with the look of the center. Phase II is the new construction of an addition which will eventually be joined to Phase I of the center in early summer of 2000. A summer program for school age children is currently being developed by Bright Horizons to coincide with the opening of Phase II.

Open houses will be held over the next several weeks and months, but those interested in getting enrollment information and/or seeing the center should call 858-2080. Also visit LITTLE OAKS web page located at Oakland County's web site.

*(Thanks to Sally Blundo, County Executive's office, for the title of this article.)*

## EMPLOYEES, from page 1

"Day in and day out the men and women of Oakland County government excel at the highest levels and the beneficiaries of this work ethic are the citizens of Oakland County," Mr. Patterson said in his remarks.

He then went on to highlight the various awards earned by county departments in 1999:

- ◆ **Information Technology** - Urban and Regional Information Systems Association award for Exemplary Government-wide Information Systems. Also the Environmental Systems Research Institute Special Achievement award for outstanding work in the field of Geographic Information Systems.
- ◆ **Administration** - NACo awards for Automation Alley and the Canadian Trade Missions
- ◆ **Community Corrections** - NACo awards for the Club 'Em and Weekend Alternative for Misdemeanants (WAM) programs.
- ◆ **Fiscal Services** - Government Finance Officers Association awards for Excellence in Financial Reports, Popular Annual Financial Report and the Distinguished Budget Presentation.

- ◆ **Oakland County International Airport** - Balchen/Post award for Outstanding Snow and Ice Removal and a Keep Michigan Beautiful award.
- ◆ **Probate Court** - Winner of the American Correctional Association's Exemplary Offender Program award.
- ◆ **Community Development Division** - HUD Best Practices award for its Home Improvement Program.
- ◆ **Health Division** - NACo awards for Shaken Baby Syndrome and Substance Abuse programs.

Mr. Patterson said that "although departments win the awards, it is the people in those departments who make it possible."

He then recognized Vilisa Carson, a night-time custodial worker, for her extraordinary effort in tracking down the owner of a torn \$5 bill. Vilisa found a piece of the bill in the trash bin and then set about finding the rest of it, which she did, along with the envelope it came in. Then by matching up the last four letters of the name visible on the torn envelope with the name plates in the office, she was able to determine the rightful owner of the \$5 bill.

continued next page



# Employee of the Month



**Melissa Hardenburgh**

It takes a very gifted and understanding person to work with teenagers at Children's Village. Floor staff youth specialist II Melissa Hardenburgh exemplifies those qualities. She has been an Oakland County employee for 20 years and during that time has established very positive programs to reach the teenage girls she works with. The

young women are taken on field trips and honored at award ceremonies when they are released from Children's Village.

"Melissa works harder than any 10 people," says program supervisor Lynn Hooper. "She does so many projects of her own volition." On top of being recognized as Employee of the Month, she was given the Michigan Juvenile Detention Association Award in 1991. She also gives recognition to volunteers that give their time to help the kids.

On top of loving her job, Melissa loves her family. Her favorite pastime is spending time with Ken, her husband of 20 years, and her two children at home in Clarkston. She also enjoys a nice day off to go shopping. The girls in Children's Village do some "shopping" of their own at the Mini-Kmart, a clothing closet, which is another of Melissa's great programs.

**Marcy Raska**



Educating our children about health is something that is very important to all of us. Marcy Raska, a student program facilitator, makes sure the job gets done. She is a public health nurse at Oakland County Health Division in Southfield and her job is to educate children and parents on health issues. Marcy explains "I love my job, it has such variety. I get to work with many clients like students, teachers, mothers and babies."

Marcy has been promoting health at Oakland County for 15 years.

Her supervisor Barbara Donahue says, "Marcy consistently is thorough and professional in executing the responsibilities and demands of the student program and accomplishing the last-minute details." She lives in Harrison Township with her husband, Jeff, and her 2 sons, Jacob and Maxwell. When not at work, she and her husband love to cheer for their sons' hockey team and participate in all sorts of outdoor sports.

*see more Employees of the Month on page 12*

## EMPLOYEES, from page 8

"How easy it would have been for Vilisa to just ignore the whole thing," Mr. Patterson said. "But she didn't . . . and that's what makes our employees special and sets them apart from all the rest."

At that point, Mr. Patterson asked Vilisa to stand up and as she received the adulation of the crowd, Deputy County Executive Ken Rogers walked down the aisle to present her with an envelope that contained fifty \$5 bills as a token of appreciation for what she had done.

Mr. Patterson also singled out Equalization Manager Robert Vandermark for praise because of his efforts in uncovering and exposing a plan by the Michigan Tax Commission that would have resulted in a huge financial windfall for the state's utility companies at the expense of other businesses, citizens, schools and local government in the state of Michigan.

"The examples of Vilisa Carson and Bob Vandermark serve to illustrate the point that whether it's \$5 or millions of dollars at

stake, there's always someone at 1200 N. Telegraph Road watching out for the citizens of Oakland County," Mr. Patterson said.

In his address, Mr. Patterson also proposed a new program that would benefit those employees enrolled in the County's Deferred Compensation Plan. Presently, employees have the option of diverting a percentage of their paycheck into this program. To encourage employees to save and provide for their future and that of their families, the County Executive is recommending that the county match a maximum of \$25 each month to the deferred compensation account of every employee enrolled in the program.

"If this proposal is implemented here, Oakland County would become the first county in the state of Michigan to provide employees with a savings plan that offers an added cushion of financial security in retirement which in my opinion they have earned," Mr. Patterson said to a round of enthusiastic applause.

## Telegraph

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# kudos celebrations con

## kudos

**Julie Boike** and **Laurie Ford** of the Worksite Community Health Program at the Health Division passed the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing examination and are now certified health education specialists.

Deputy County Executive **Doug Williams** is one of nine people statewide selected by Governor Engler to serve on the Michigan Commission on Public Pension and Retiree Health Benefits.

**Jack Smith**, of Chief & Support Services, was elected in December to a three-year term on the Oakland County Employees' Retirement Commission.

**Marilyn Baker** was appointed to Supervisory Committee at the Oakland County Credit Union.

**Ellen Dorshow-Gordon**, Health Division epidemiologist, has been selected for inclusion in the Millenium Edition of Who's Who of American Women. This unique compilation will chronicle the most accomplished women from across the United States and Canada.

## retirements

**Rita Kalka** retired on 10/29/99 after 21 years with FM&O.

**Mary Snell** retired on 11/30/99 after 22 years with FM&O.

**Martha McDermott** retired on 1/21/00 after 22 years with the Research Library.

**Tomi Hunt** retired 1/27/00 from the Department of Risk Management.

**Sandy Sias** retired on 1/18/00 from the Treasurers Office.

## marriage

**Sue Elsesser**, health educator in the Health Division, married Kevin Ruehle on 11/27/99.

## births

**Stephan Yates** of FM&O and his wife Terri welcomed their new son, Dakota Charles, on 8/31/99.

**Lisa Delbridge** of Fiscal Services and her husband John had their son, Tristan Todd, on 8/11/99.

**Michelle Stover** of Aviation and her husband Dave welcomed their second child, Danielle Marie, on 1/18/00.

**Deana Farley** from the Treasurers Office and her husband, Chuck, from the Sheriff's Dept., had their first child, Charles.

**Kelly Stout** from the Drain Commissioner's O&M Division gave birth to a baby girl, Sophia Kristine Elizabeth, on Dec. 22 1999.

**Kristina Hedges** at the Drain Commissioner's O&M Division and her husband Bob welcomed a new addition, Mary Elizabeth, on 1/2/00.

David and **Anne Cook** from the Drain Commissioner's O&M Division had a new son, Benjamin, on 10/5/99.

## adoption

**Diane Castle** in the Assignment Clerks office, adopted her daughter, Tina Marie, born July 20, 1985.

## new hires

**Mike Daly** was hired in the Safety unit as an alarm installer for the Dept. of FM&O 9/27/99 and then left on 1/6/00.

**David Kostrzewa** was hired in the Custodial Unit as a general helper in the Dept. of FM&O on 11/1/99.

**Ed Joss** was hired as an engineering aide for tech support for Facilities Management on 9/7/99.

**Chad Shmidgall** was hired as a student engineer for Tech Support in Facilities Management on 9/7/99.

**Jonathan Bailey** was hired as a student engineer for Tech Support in Facilities Management on 12/20/9.

**Marsha Reid** was hired as a general helper in the Custodial Unit of FM&O on 12/13/99.

**Randy Pender** was hired as a general helper in the Custodial Unit of FM&O on 12/27/99.

**Suzanne Taravella** was hired as the new tech I in the County Law Library 11/8/99.

**Rose Capalungan** was hired as the new PTNE in the County Law Library 10/4/99.

**Janise Szymanski** was hired as a student for the County Law Library on 9/20/99.

**Jeffrey Parrott** was hired as an engineering aide I in the Drain Commissioner's Office on 6/21/99.

**Niesa McGugan** was hired as a clerk II in the Drain Commissioner's Office 6/7/99.

**Katherine Gasperich** was hired as a typist II in the Drain Commissioner's Office on 8/9/99.

**Mark Danowski** was hired as a customer services tech I in the Drain Commissioner's Office on 8/9/99.

**John Thael** joined the Treasurers Office as a personal property tax collector in 7/99 and was married on 9/25/99.

The Assignment Clerks office welcomed **Darryl Barnes** in October. He recently graduated high school on 1/21/00 and will be heading off to college in Florida.

**Vance Sharette** was hired on 11/29/99 as a general helper in the Water Maintenance Dept. at the Drain Commissioner's O&M Division.

**Munther Najor** was hired 1/10/00 as an electronics technician in the Electronics Dept. at the Drain Commissioner's O&M Division

**Christopher Naftzger** was hired 1/12/00 as a student at the Executive Office Dept. of Media & Communications.



# ning & going swap shop

## promotions

**Bill Wilson** was promoted to skilled maintenance mechanic II on 8/28/99 at FM&O.

**Tim Hoskins** was promoted to skilled maintenance mechanic II on 8/28/99 at FM&O.

**Dave Atkins** was promoted to maintenance planner I on 10/23/99 at FM&O.

**Lloyd Nowlin** was promoted to custodial worker II on 12/18/99 at FM&O.

**Troy Hamblen** was promoted to custodial worker II on 1/1/00 at FM&O.

**Jack Wright** was promoted to groundskeeper specialist, irrigation, on 9/25/99 at FM&O.

**Suzanne Ranger** was promoted from health educator II to health educator III and will oversee the Health Division's Cancer Prevention Center on 11/27/99 in the Health Division.

**Donna Genre** was promoted from secretary I to technical assistant on 1/27/00 in Risk Management.

**Terri Easterling** was promoted from typist II to secretary I on 2/1/00 in Risk Management.

**Arthur Hester** was promoted from construction inspector I to construction inspector II on 5/8/99 at the Drain Commissioner's office.

**Dolly Craft** was promoted from employee records specialist to central employee records coordinator on 11/21/98 at the Drain Commissioner's office.

**Michelle Shannon** was promoted to a records clerk in the Assignment Clerks Office.

**Dianna Holloway** of the SOCSDS was promoted to engineering aide II on

12/4/99 at the Drain Commissioner's O&M division.

**Mike Freed** of Pump Maintenance was promoted to pump maintenance mechanic II on 1/01/00 at the Drain Commissioner's O&M Division.

## transfers

**Julie Panasuk** transferred from the Health Dept. to the Research Library on 12/31/99.

**Angela Stites** transferred from the student position to the general clerical position at the Library for the Visually and Physically impaired.

**Amanda Booth** transferred from the PTNE position in the Law Library to the PTNE position at the Jail Library.

**Donna Carrel** transferred from Support Services/Mailroom to the Treasurers Office in 12/99.

**Lisa Johnson** transferred from Register of Deeds to the Treasurers Office in 11/99.

**Rebecca Reyes** was transferred from the County Clerk's Office to the Mediation Dept. of the Assignment Clerks Office.

## fond farewells

On 12/3/99, circuit court assignment clerk, **Mary Jane Rigonan**, left the Assignment Clerks office.

**Michelle Kase**, a records clerk, left the Assignment Clerks office on 10/22/99 to spend time with her 3 daughters.

## for sale

Small counter-top refrigerator with little freezer compartment, and very small microwave oven are for sale. Both are almost new. \$80 for both. Call Carol at 80936.

Mobile home for sale in Lexington MI. Access to Lake Huron for \$10,500. Contact Diane at (810) 667-1805.

Ivory flower girl dress with train and veil for sale. Size 4t. \$100. Contact Diane at 80742.

## Spring Tournament Schedule

### Oakland County Employees Bowling Tournament

@Century Lanes @ 12:30, Saturday, April 8, 2000  
Cost \$125.00 per team (\$25.00 per) 5 man teams  
A large pizza for every team included.

### Spring Golf

18 Hole Shotgun at 9 a.m., Scramble Tournament  
Held @ White Lake Oaks on Sunday, April 30, 2000  
Cost \$120.00 per 4 man team

### Fall Golf Tournament

Date is October 8th @ Springfield Oaks Golf Course - same format as the Spring Tournament - 18 hole shotgun scramble

### Fall Bowling Tournament

Set for Saturday, 11-4-00  
Price and Pizza same/location pending

Contact Nancy Seets @698-2700 for more info.

## 2000 Totals

\$3,211.59

42

76%

Casual Day Fund

ESP Suggestions

Direct Deposit



# Employee of the Month



**Catherine Carpenter**

"Cathy is a high energy and enthusiastic person. She thrives on projects and assignments that challenge her skills and knowledge and allow her to learn and grow. Some of her outstanding attributes include creativity, dependability, flexibility and adaptability. She is a team player who is also able to take appropriate initiative to help the customer receive the best possible service. I personally and professionally

really enjoy working with Cathy and am very grateful that she is part of our team." As you can see, Sharon Hinkins has many good things to say about Cathy Carpenter, who works as a clerk III in the Assurance and Advocacy department at the Health Division.

Cathy has been with Oakland County for 4 years and loves the variety of people and duties in her job. She always has something to do and never gets bored with working. At home, she is very involved with her kids as well as other children. She participates in the PTA, Boy Scouts, and Project Linus, a blanket program for hospitalized children. She lives with her husband of 18 years, Larry, and her 2 boys in Waterford.



**Joan Coon**

Negotiating purchases is not a pleasant experience for most people but Joan Coon thrives on it. As a procurement technician for the Purchasing Division, Joan's job is to negotiate the buying and handle the paperwork. She loves her job because of the contact she has with people from all over the county.

She's been an Oakland County employee for more than 5 years and her friendliness and knowledge have earned her respect among her co-workers. Her supervisor, Joseph Hylla, explains, "Joan is a top notch employee, and is especially good with the contracts." He goes on to say, "She is a pleasure to work with, and makes our department a very enjoyable working environment."

At home she lives with her husband, Jesse, who is a Waterford Firefighter, and their two-year-old son. Spending time with her son is her favorite thing to do, as well as camping trips in the summer, and traveling to warm getaways to beat the cold Michigan winter weather.

**Vicki Aldred**



One of Oakland County's high tech innovations is the new CLEMIS system. CLEMIS is a countywide dispatching/computer network unit for police departments. Behind the hard work and constant growing technology is Vicki Aldred. She is a customer support specialist at Information Technology. While many of us are confused about what is going on with new technology these days, Vicki embraces it. She loves working with the new software. Her supervisor Jamie Hess says, "She is a great employee and a very hard worker. She takes the bull by the horns. She is able to deal with and handle so many problems and makes the job easier for everyone around her."

After 15 years of experience at Oakland County, she has no trouble handling a high tech system. Not only is Vicki working on the current CLEMIS system, she is learning and teaching the new one that is coming in. With such a high tech job, she likes to relax with some old fashioned country line dancing. At home in Ortonville, she lives with her husband of 21 years, Gary, and her 2 daughters.

**Sandy Tillman**



Sandy Tillman is always on the job. At Maintenance and Operations, there are constant calls coming in about problems in need of urgent attention. As a dispatcher for Oakland County, Sandy is on the job, and she loves it. She doesn't mind the stress at all, and says she works with some great people. Her supervisor Gina Bohn says, "Sandy does an excellent job in a position that can be very hectic and stressful. She truly deserves the Employee of the Month award!"

Sandy is starting her 21st year at Oakland County this year. She lives in Waterford with her husband, Jim, who also works at Oakland County. Sandy and Jim spend their time going to their 11 year old daughter's basketball games, and enjoying the outdoors doing a variety of things from camping to kayaking or simply taking their dogs for a walk.