



oakland county employees

# Telegraph

summer 2000

## Off to Work We Go

Interesting activities abounded on Thursday, April 26, as children ranging in ages from four to seventeen accompanied their parents to Oakland County's annual Take Your Child To Work Day. The purpose of the event was best expressed by Prentiss Malone, a financial analyst with Fiscal Services, who said "I want them to experience the workaday world to let them know this as a phase of life that they'll be going through."

Prentiss's grandchildren, Christian, 8, Suansica, 7, and P.J. Malone, 5, began their day with a visit to their grandfather's office in the Executive Office Building, where they learned the ins and outs of financial management while playing with the computer and drinking chocolate milk. Suansica, who wanted to "find out what it is like to be a grownup", agreed with Christian when he stated that his Grandpa's job was "good. It helps people. He makes budgets."

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The Malone children enjoy a day at the office with their grandfather, Prentiss Malone, financial analyst with Fiscal Services. Left to right: Suansica, Prentiss, PJ and Christian

## High Tech Computer System Improves Court's Efficiency

Systems and Computer Technology Corporation (SCT), a global company with nearly 2,500 clients worldwide, has been selected as the vendor to install the new software package for Oakland County's state-of-the-art Judicial Information Management System (JIMS).

According to Kevin Oeffner, Circuit Court Administrator, the SCT court software has a look much like Microsoft Office products which makes it user friendly for employees familiar with Word, Excel and Access.

"Benefits will accrue to the Circuit, Probate and 52nd District Courts as well as the County Clerk's Office, Prosecutor's Office and Reimbursement Division in the way we manage and access case information and as a result of the streamlined processes associated with entering and retrieving information," Oeffner said.

Oeffner also noted that improved efficiency from the new system will enable users to

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(248) 858-1022

OC Hotline

press 1 for Employee Information

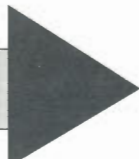
press 2 for Latest OC News

press 3 for Arts & Cultural Events

press 4 for Community & Minority Affairs News

INSIDE . . .

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# PATTERSON / *Person to Person*

In doing a little research recently for a speech I was asked to give at the Home-town Heroes Award Luncheon in Birmingham to honor outstanding community volunteers, I was amazed to learn how many volunteer programs Oakland County offers. I knew our employees were deeply involved in such annual events as the March of Dimes WalkAmerica and the United Way Campaign, but I didn't realize the extent to which they also participated in or supported a wide array of other programs that provide valuable assistance to the community.

The Oakland County Sheriffs Mounted Unit, formerly called the Posse, has been around since 1820. The 35 volunteer members of the unit provide their own horses and receive no pay. They patrol county parks, the Paint Creek Trail, the Woodward Dream Cruise and shopping malls during the holiday season.

The 52/4 District Court's Volunteer Probation Officer Program was the brainchild of municipal judge W.D. Bollinger who initiated it with the help of six volunteers and a caseload of 20. By 1996 the caseload escalated to more than 2,000 probationers, an office staff of three probation officers, two probation clerks, two part-time clerks and over 25 volunteers. The idea of the program, which was patterned after one created by Judge Keith Leenhouts in Royal Oak more than 40 years

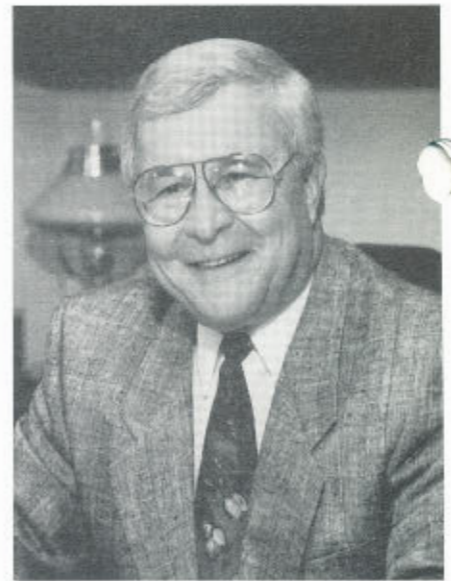
ago, is to put minor offenders on probation and pair them with select volunteers who can help save them from a life of crime.

Over the past 40 years, Oakland County Probate Court's award winning Youth Assistance Program has utilized the services of some 17,000 volunteers, many of them county employees, to provide prevention programs for an estimated 800,000 children and families in Oakland County.

Oakland County's Animal Control Division sponsors an Explorer Scout Post which provides a real life learning experience for youngsters who might be interested in pursuing a career that involves the care of animals.

For the past 13 years, Oakland County Sheriff's Department personnel have volunteered their time to take 500 mentally and physically challenged individuals fishing and boating on Cass Lake.

Of course this is only a small sampling of the volunteer effort being made in the halls of Oakland County government. I'd wager that a majority of our 4,300 employees spend at least a portion of their spare time helping to improve the quality of life for others. Volunteering can be very rewarding. I know that from personal experience. In 1980, my best friend and two of his children were killed in a pri-



**L. Brooks Patterson**  
Oakland County Executive

vate plane crash. To honor the memory of the two children, Tim and Jennifer Dobson, I started the Rainbow Connection which annually grants wishes to children with life-threatening illnesses. This year alone, the Rainbow Connection is expected to raise \$750,000 and grant wishes to some 250 children all across the state of Michigan.

There is a warm glow you get from giving of yourself to others. If you've never volunteered, you should try it. It's an experience I highly recommend.

## Pernick Fund Aids Health Education

The memorial fund established by the Board of Commissioners to honor longtime Southfield Commissioner Lawrence Pernick, who died unexpectedly in November of 1997, has raised nearly \$5,000 since its inception. The money has been used to print educational materials in Arabic for dissemination to members of the Arab community in the wake of a lead poisoning threat which occurred in 1998. Funds were also spent in 1999 on developing informational materials on proper hand washing procedures in the aftermath of a Hepatitis A outbreak.

Because Pernick was a strong advocate for the disadvantaged, his colleagues on the Board created the memorial fund in his name to support health education programs for underserved mothers, children and adolescents, homeless families and individuals, handicapped persons and those with chronic disease, the uninsured, the poor, the elderly and minorities.

Contributions can be sent to: Lawrence Pernick Health Education Fund for Oakland County, c/o Oakland County Health Division, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac, MI 48341.



# Students Get a Civics Lesson in County Government

More than 130 area high school students, thirsting for knowledge, spent the better part of Thursday, April 13 learning about Oakland County government. The students from Pontiac Central, Pontiac Northern, Crossroads, Clarkston High, McCarroll and Oakland Christian were hosted by the County Executive's office, Board of Commissioners, Circuit Court, Probate Court, the Sheriff's Department and the Prosecutors Office.

The 25 young men and women who opted to attend the County Executive portion of Youth in Government Day, sponsored by the Greater Pontiac Community Coalition, listened to brief remarks by Deputy County Executive Ken Rogers, Personnel Director Judy Eaton, Arts, Culture and Film Director Nancy Hayden, Economic Development Director Jim Bacon, Deputy Management and Budget Director Laurie VanPelt (representing Management and Budget Director Jeff Pardee) and FM&O Manager Dick Johnston (representing Facilities Management Director Dave Ross).

After the administration officials described their department's functions and responsibilities, the students boarded two vans which took them to the Information Technology Building for a live video conferencing demonstration from Paris which was organized by Therese Thill, Export Assistance Specialist with the Planning and Development Services Division.

Following the half-hour session, during which students were allowed to ask questions of the Paris participants, they were ushered downstairs for a quick tour of the Road Commission's Fast Trac operation. After learning about how Fast Trac keeps on top of traffic patterns and problems from Lester Akey, ATMS engineer, the students were transported to the Medical Examiner's building for a presentation given by Bob Gerds, administrator of the office. During the presentation, Gerds showed slides of the interior and exterior of the building including intake, autopsy rooms, toxicology, pathology and bereavement rooms. By this time, stomachs were beginning to growl, so the kids were transported back to the Health Division auditorium for a lunch of pizza, salad and pop.

About 40 students were guests of the Circuit and Probate Courts. They had the opportunity of witnessing a mock trial that dealt with a case involving reckless homicide on a snowmobile. The students also sat in on several court sessions, viewed a video on juvenile justice and had the opportunity of meeting Judges Hallmark and Young.

Twenty-five students hosted by the Prosecutors Office heard Assistant Prosecutor Charesa Johnson outline the organizational structure of the office and detail the progression of a criminal case through the court system. Assistant Prosecutors Paul Walton and Greg Townsend demonstrated how a case is prepared for



Students from Pontiac Northern, Pontiac Central and Clarkston watch as Assistant Prosecutor Greg Townsend explains forensic evidence from a recent court case.

trial and students were shown actual forensic evidence that included blood spatter evidence, bullet wound samples and vehicle impact. Teen Court coordinator Amy Allen explained this innovative new program that involves high school students who are given the responsibility of determining appropriate sentences for juveniles who have committed minor offenses.

The ominous sound of cell doors clanging shut could be heard by the thirty students who toured the Oakland County Jail. As they were taken through the facility, they were able to see actual prisoners in their cells and were shown the various tactics used to move inmates from one location to another. The youngsters were also shown a video that gave them some idea what can happen when someone runs afoul of the law.

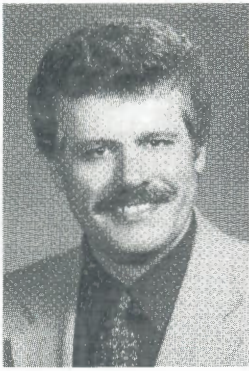
But on a more positive note, the students learned about career opportunities available in law enforcement, the requirements involved and what they should be doing now to prepare themselves for the field.

Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chairman John McCulloch greeted 17 Youth in Government Day participants at the Board of Commissioners Auditorium and then the group was allowed to attend a meeting of the Finance Committee. Judy Eaton, Director of the Personnel Department and Sue Wells, Chief of Recreation for Parks and Recreation discussed youth employment opportunities available with the County. Prior to lunch, the students toured the Research Library and the Library for the Physically and Visually Impaired.

Following lunch, the students participated in a lively discussion regarding the media with Commissioners Brenda Causey-Mitchell, Lawrence Obrecht, William Patterson and Shelly Taub, which was moderated by Detroit Free Press reporter Hugh McDiarmid, Jr.

The Youth in Government Day Program ended around 1:30 p.m. as students headed home with full bellies of pizza and minds chocked full of new information on the inner workings and the value of Oakland County Government.





**Bob Dustman**  
Media and  
Communications

## The View from Here

As someone who's been a weight-training devotee for nearly 40 years, I've seen the gym environment change in dramatic ways over the years. One of the more significant and unfortunate developments has been the proliferation of drugs and dangerous over-the-counter "natural" supplements used by young men and women in search of the perfect body or superhuman strength.

These artificial aids can help the trainee achieve some pretty amazing results. They increase muscle mass and strength considerably in a relatively short period of time. It's a great way to go - that is if you like playing Russian roulette with your life. The problem is steroids and some of these so-called "natural" over-the-counter supplements can pose serious health risks or in some cases cause death.

I raise the issue here because many of you probably have youngsters who are into weight training, body building or power-lifting, or maybe you engage in those activities yourself. You should know that if your son, for example, is 140 pounds in June, sporting 14 inch arms and 38 inch chest and is 185 pounds by October with 16 inch arms and a 45 inch chest, something is going on. He ain't putting on that kind of size by simply working out and eating his vegetables.

While I am concerned with youngsters taking steroids, my biggest worry is the ready availability at health food stores of supplements like Androstentione, Creatine, DHEA, HMB and a new testosterone gel that will soon be on the market. Any one of these in combination or alone can do irreparable damage.

In my layman's opinion, the above-mentioned supplements should be regulated by the Food and Drug Administration and

available by prescription only. But the companies that manufacture those products have a strong lobby and have vehemently opposed such action. Why? Because their profits will fall dramatically due to the increased difficulty people will have in purchasing the products.

What I'm suggesting, I guess, is that you talk to your kids about this issue. Encourage them to read up on steroids and supplements, and maybe talk to their doctor or people they know who have used them. Gaining size and strength is wonderful for self esteem, but at what cost? The thing is, the effects of steroid use might not show up for ten, fifteen or even twenty years. Recently two world-class women power-lifters died of renal cancer. They were only 36 and 45 years old, and some may argue it wasn't steroids that killed them, but rather a predisposition for that particular disease. We don't know. But the fact is steroids can damage vital organs - the heart, kidneys and liver. Why take a chance, just for a couple of extra inches on your chest or arms or the ability to lift a few more pounds?

Weight-training is a worthwhile and beneficial activity that can be fun and rewarding, especially if you do it "naturally" without any artificial aids.

I'm proud of the fact I never took steroids, although I've tried DHEA, Creatine, and HMB. But that came to a screeching halt after my best friend ended up in the hospital with blood clots. Doctors think it might have been the DHEA that caused the problem. It ended my friend's power-lifting career (at least temporarily) and almost ended his life.

A word to the wise should be sufficient. There is a whole wide, wonderful world outside the gym to experience and enjoy. Make sure you're healthy enough and live long enough to take advantage of it. The future is a great place to be. I'd like to see everyone get there, safe and sound.

## Another Slam Dunk for Campy Russell

The achievements of local basketball legend, Michael Campanella Russell, were recognized by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners at the May 18th Board meeting. Campy's outstanding athletic accomplishments while playing for the University of Michigan and throughout his professional career in the NBA, have earned him numerous awards.

Former high school classmate, Commissioner Brenda Causey-Mitchell, presented a proclamation to Campy Russell celebrating his graduation from the University of Michigan. Although he left U-M after his junior season as a first round draft

choice by the Cleveland Cavaliers, Campy was determined to fulfill a promise that he made to his mother to obtain his college degree.

Commissioner David N. Galloway recalled watching all of the Russell brothers - including Frank Russell (Oakland County Personnel) rule the basketball courts in Pontiac. Frank worked closely with Campy, who is assistant coach, and Coach Ernie Hill at Pontiac Central High School to successfully lead the team to win the Class "A" district championship and their first regional championship since 1979.

Members of the Pontiac Central Chiefs basketball team and students from the government class who were in attendance gave Campy Russell a standing ovation when he reminded them that, "Despite receiving many athletic awards - including recently becoming a member of the University of Michigan 100 Years All-Time Team - earning a college diploma is the most treasured trophy that can be attained."

Campy scores again!



# Airport Employee's Son Braves Elements to Set Ididtasport Record

Imagine hopping on a mountain bike and riding more than 1,100 miles through heavy snow and high winds while climbing steep mountain passes. Even for the most adventurous among us that would be more of a challenge than we would want. But 30 year old Mike Curiak, whose mom, Donna, works as a rental agent at Oakland County International Airport, experienced the thrill of that rugged journey in February when he, along with some twenty other daring mountain bikers, competed in the Ididtasport Impossible Ultra Endurance Race in Alaska.

The group left Knik on February 26 and Mike arrived ahead of the pack on March 12, completing the exhausting 1,100 mile trip in the record time of 15 days, one hour and 15 minutes, far surpassing the previous mark set in 1989 of 21 days, one hour and 50 minutes.

"Mike takes a lot after his dad," said his mom, Donna Curiak, when asked if such daring was a family trait. "Actually we're both still trying to figure out what possesses someone to do something like that. I guess it comes from within."

Donna says the weather on the trip was decent for 13 of the 15 days, but that her son encountered heavy snow and 60 mile per hour winds during a portion of the trip.

One night, Donna says, Mike had to bivouac outside a small town because he arrived at 4:00 in the morning before anyone was up. However, one of the good-hearted townspeople spotted Mike, woke him up and took him home to warmth and a home-cooked meal of pork chops and mashed potatoes.

Of the 20 or so bikers who started out, only 12 were left after the first 350 miles. According to Donna, Mike never intended to win, but only wanted to complete the distance so he could say he finished.

The 1,100-mile trek across the uneven terrain of the Alaska wilderness really took a physical toll on Mike.

"When I spoke with him last night (April 17), he was still recovering," said Donna. "He had gotten a lot of his strength back, but he still couldn't even do an easy bike ride around town without feeling totally exhausted."

Most people would be envious of Mike Curiak's lifestyle. He's worked as a mountain bike guide at a ranch in Grand Junction, Colorado, traveled to British Columbia and Hawaii and is talking about writing a book to chronicle his mountain biking experiences. He's also inked a deal with REI, one of the nation's major sports outfitters, to go on a coast-to-coast tour and do slide presentations for audiences.



"Mike says he has no intention of doing it again (Ididtasport)," says Donna. "But that's what he told us the last two years after previous races of 100 and 300 miles."

Donna, an 18-year county employee, lives in Waterford with her husband Jerry, who is an experimental transmission mechanic for Ford Motor Company in Livonia.

## Free Health Clinics for Children

Child Health Clinics are well baby clinics held in your neighborhood. Children from birth to kindergarten age get health checkups. This is a free service provided by Oakland County Health Division. The service is for all Oakland County families who do not have Medicaid or an HMO insurance to cover health checkups for their preschool children.

A staff person will set up your child's first appointment. Be sure to bring your child's immunization record to the clinic.

Appointments are planned according to your child's age and needs. Appointments

last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. At each appointment we welcome and register your child. We will check your child's weight, height and head size. Other simple tests will be done as needed including developmental screening, hemoglobin, urine test, vision and hearing.

A public health nurse trained to do physical exams will give your child a health checkup and shots. If a problem is found, we will talk about it with you. The public health nurse helps you find a doctor or resources to handle the problem.

A public health nurse talks with you

about your child's health. She answers questions about feeding, behavior, toilet training, growth and development. You may talk about your own health or the health of other family members.

Children must be enrolled before they are 3 1/2 years old. To enroll call Oakland County Health Division:  
**Pontiac:** (248) 858-1311  
**Southfield** (248) 424-7066  
**Walled Lake** (248) 926-3341

Keep your children healthy - enroll in Child Health Clinics today!!



## KIDS To WORK from page 1

Later in the morning, the Malones accompanied Deborah Dean of Equalization, her daughter Destené, 17, and niece Alicia Fair, 13, and Tim Soave and his son Andrew, 9 for a tour of Emergency Management Services. Upon arrival at EMS, they were joined by Colleen Prosykiuk, her children Emily, 4 and Jake, 7 and Bethany Kenny and her daughter Emily, 9, for a tour of the dispatch center. Tour guide Lieutenant Zeeman of the Sheriff's Department explained when to call 911 and the different roles and responsibilities of the communication agents involved in the dispatch system. The group then gathered in the central command room where Colleen Prosykiuk discussed safety measures families can take for severe weather - having an emergency plan, safe places to take shelter and items needed for an emergency kit.

Then it was on to the Information Technology building and an informative tour of the FAST TRAC traffic operations center for Oakland County. The kids were intrigued by the eight foot tall wall of television monitors showing the pattern of traffic on roads throughout the county and

asked a lot of questions. The tour ended with the arrival of lunchtime when participants departed for their favorite restaurants. After lunch the group again joined forces for a look at the Sheriff's Department and a visit with Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.



Tour of the FAST TRAC Operations Center.

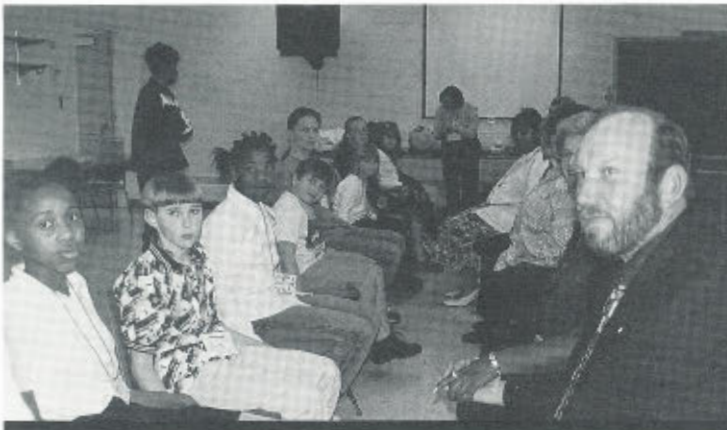
Meanwhile, over at the Health Division, staffers' children were welcomed by Oakland County Health Division manager Rosemarie Rowney, who set the stage for the afternoon's activities. Bonnie Conway, health educator, presented an entertaining series of games which taught listening skills, communication and resisting peer pressure. The most popular game was a spirited version of "Speed Quarters" which pitted Health Division staff against their kids in a communication contest. After a tough battle, the adults emerged victorious but the kids weren't disappointed for long. A huge make-your-own sundae bar had been set up and everyone enjoyed the delicious treat. The highly successful day was summed up by Latrena Smith-Watson, a worker in OCHD's child care clinics,

when she stated that her daughter Katyla, 8, had learned "to see what I have to do to provide for her."

Adults were not the only ones pleased with Take Your Child To Work Day. The kids looked to the future with a variety of career choices. Perhaps the most ambitious is Emily Prosykiuk, 4, who is "going to try every single job." Emily's brother Jake, 7, says "I am going to be an artist and try to get a job to design different video games for kids."

Deborah Dean's daughter Destené, 17, wants to be a lawyer while Emily Kenny, 9, wants to be a "teacher of little kids - 3rd grade." And our streets will be safe when PJ Malone, 5, grows up and becomes "a crimefighter."

Speed Quarters being played



Ice cream social at the Health Division



## COMPUTER from page 1

redirect their staffs to more urgent and important matters as well as giving them the ability to create ad hoc reports by writing their own requirements for retrieving information.

Other advantages from JIMS include: ability to enter and query large amounts of data from one screen, a dramatic reduction in redundant data entry, an ability to electronically exchange case information between the courts, Prosecutors and

Clerks offices and Reimbursement.

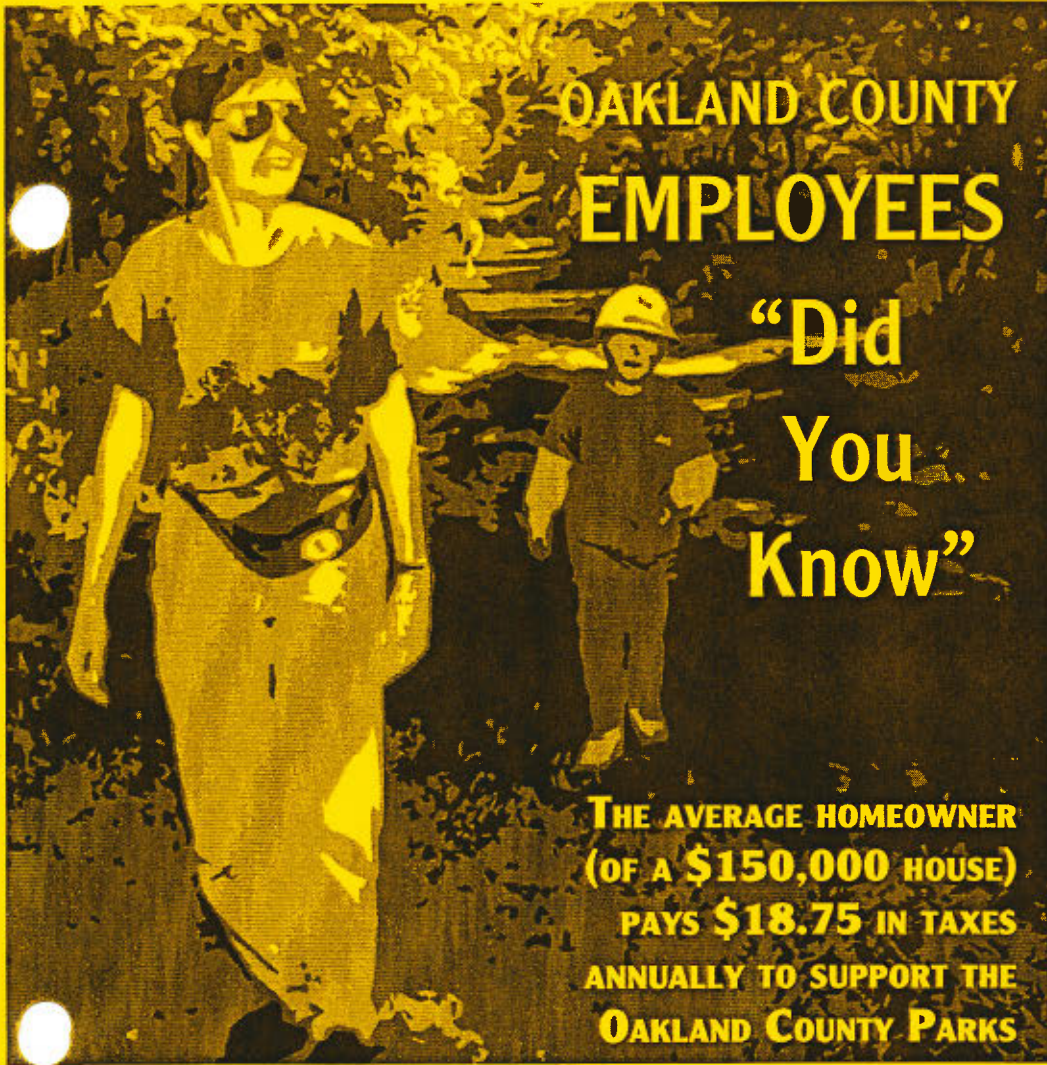
The system also has a feature called Court Connect that will enable people from remote locations to access, by way of the Internet, docket and other court information that is public record.

"Perhaps one of the most exciting benefits of this system is e-filing," Oeffner said. "Although it won't be available in the first phase, it will be phased in eventually after

the case management system is operational. E-filing will allow attorneys and pro se litigants to file cases from remote locations, which will greatly reduce foot traffic and parking congestion at the court.

Oeffner adds that while the 25-year old mainframe system has served the county well, it is time to move ahead with better and more efficient technology that is on the cutting-edge.





# OAKLAND COUNTY EMPLOYEES

## “Did You Know”

**THE AVERAGE HOMEOWNER  
(OF A \$150,000 HOUSE)  
PAYS \$18.75 IN TAXES  
ANNUALLY TO SUPPORT THE  
OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS**



THE OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION HAS PRESERVED, IMPROVED AND MAINTAINED NEARLY 6,000 ACRES DURING THE PAST 33 YEARS

Oakland County Parks promotes nature conservation by recycling, installing energy-saving devices, using environmentally friendly products, limiting chemical use and promoting environmental awareness

PROVIDES FREE CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING EVERY YEAR (40,000 TREES IN EIGHT YEARS) THEN CHIPS THE TREES AND OFFERS THEM BACK FREE TO COUNTY RESIDENTS FOR USE AS MULCH AND COMPOST

**That millage dollars have already made possible:**

### **More than 1.5 million people visit the Oakland County Parks each year**

The easiest way to remember the Oakland County Parks is that all 11 parks and golf courses end in “OAKS” (Addison Oaks, Groveland Oaks...)

THE PARKS SYSTEM IS “ON-LINE” AT [WWW.CO.OAKLAND.MI.US](http://WWW.CO.OAKLAND.MI.US). THE WEBSITE OFFERS DETAILS ON EACH OF THE 11 PARKS AND GOLF COURSES, DIRECTIONAL MAPS AND DISCOUNT COUPONS

Oakland County Parks facilities and programs are supported by millage funds by Oakland County residents

**VOTERS WILL DETERMINE A 10-YEAR PARKS RENEWAL ON AUGUST 8, 2000**

**This one-quarter (1/4) mill is for the purpose of acquiring, improving and maintaining parks and recreation areas in Oakland County**

- Two new features at Waterford Oaks Waterpark: The Big Bucket (children’s water interactive playground) and Ragin’ Rapids (group raft ride)
- A 4,300-square foot addition at the Lewis E. Wint Nature Center in Clarkston to house new and renovated exhibits, classroom space and office areas.
- A MAJOR RENOVATION PROJECT AT GROVELAND OAKS RESULTED IN 462 LARGER CAMPSITES, REORGANIZED GROUP CAMPSITES, UPDATED/NEW ELECTRICAL AND WATER HOOKUPS AND DAY-USE PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS.
- The Addison Oaks concession building was renovated to include new entrances with wheelchair accessible ramps and decking.
- BY 2001, CONSTRUCTION OF TRAILS FOR HIKING, NATURE VIEWING AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING AT LYON OAKS COUNTY PARK WILL BE COMPLETED. ALSO PLANNED ARE A DRIVING RANGE, PRACTICE GREEN, 18-HOLE GOLF COURSE AND A FULL-SERVICE CLUB HOUSE WITH BANQUET FACILITIES AND A PRO SHOP.



# Russian Lawyers Visit Oakland County

*(Editor's note: Judy Cunningham, Oakland County Corporation Counsel, coordinated the tour of the county complex by 13 Russian attorney's who visited the area recently. Below are her reflections on their visit).*



Russian attorneys meet with Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson

On Thursday, April 27 Oakland County government was privileged to host 13 Russian lawyers traveling in our area as guests of the Clarkston and Waterford Rotary Clubs. County Executive L. Brooks Patterson asked me to help arrange their visit, so with the assistance of several key individuals, we planned a day of touring with stops at the Law Library, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Corporation Counsel, Personnel Department, Economic Development, and even a visit with Mr. Patterson himself.

When we toured the Law Library, Diane Zyskowski and her staff explained the Library's on-line legal research capabilities. The Russian visitors (only of a couple of whom spoke English) asked a number of questions through two interpreters traveling with them. From the Library we moved on to Circuit Court where Judge Alice Gilbert (herself of part Russian descent) was holding criminal call. We watched a number of cases, including pleas, arraignments, and sentences. One sentence in particular seemed to fascinate our guests: Judge Gilbert sentenced one man on a first offense drug charge to write a 1500 word essay about his crime. I was told to write how his behavior had impacted him, his family and what all of this meant for his future behavior. The man looked somewhat bewildered as the

Judge pronounced sentence. Obviously, it wasn't what he'd expected. The Russian attorneys found it interesting and said the essay sentencing reminded them of school. They asked if this was a common practice in American courts.

Our guests had a number of questions about the courtroom set-up - i.e., who sits where and why. They wanted to know why some of the prisoners were in blue prison garb and others were dressed in orange. (The answer has to do with how the Oakland County Jail classifies prisoners: those in maximum security are required to wear orange prison clothes (apparently so they stand out better). The Russian attorneys also asked whether victims have input into the criminal justice system, which gave me an opportunity to explain a bit of information about the Crime Victims Rights Act.

When we visited the Prosecutor's Office, David Gorcyca and his staff were kind enough to host lunch and give a brief overview of how a criminal case proceeds through the system. Although our guests had some polite questions about criminal procedure, they were more interested in the election process. They asked David about his election, including how much it cost him to run for prosecutor in 1996. In fact, money was a recurring theme in their

questions. They had a number of questions for Brooks about the affluence of Oakland County and were curious about the County's budget and financial situation. One of the women lawyers said that in her home town roads were the biggest problem; Brooks and everyone else in the room sympathized as we are certainly not strangers to road construction problems. Brooks also shared concerns brought about by full employment - that is, not being able to find workers for some jobs. Our guests also had questions about public corruption, apparently a hot topic in Russia.

They wanted to know how often it happens here, how do we prevent it, and what do we do about it. (It is somewhat ironic that on the same day the Russians visited and asked about public officials, the Sheriff in a neighboring county was found guilty of criminal sexual conduct by a Mt. Pleasant jury.)

When the group visited my staff in Corporation Counsel they heard, among other things, a brief overview of our mental health hearing responsibilities and had a number of questions about the safeguards in the system to prevent abuses on the part of some family members who may want to commit someone and force treatment involuntarily. To learn about private sector law firms, they also visited the offices of the Oakland County Bar Association, where my husband, Jay, and one of his law partners talked to them about private practice. Before answering their questions (mostly about how American lawyers make money) my husband talked to them about the Russian hockey players who are stars of the Red Wings. He apparently made an impression because when I mentioned that my husband had met them earlier that week, most of them nodded and laughed about the references to the Red Wings. If nothing else, there is apparently a universal language and understanding of sports.



# Going Home, For the Very First Time

by Kal Engelberg, Chief of Youth Assistance, Probate Court

In September, I began an odyssey by accompanying my wife as she returned to the country of her birth and early childhood for the first time. It had been more than 40 years since Julie and her parents escaped as the Russian tanks raced down her street on their way to crush the revolution in Budapest. It had been 10 years since Communism was overthrown. Hungary and its sister "Iron Curtain" countries had adopted democracy and embraced the free enterprise system. Julie and I knew it was going to be a very different kind of vacation. For her, it was an opportunity to revisit her home, and see as an adult what she could only remember from the perspective and memories of a child. For me, someone who has lived in Oakland County all of his life, it was an opportunity to see how my wife of 30 years had lived, and played before coming to America. Despite buying what seemed like every book on Hungary in Border's and looking at countless web sites on the Internet, neither of us was really prepared for what we saw or experienced.

The trip began with a quick 45 minute drive to Windsor airport where we got out of our car, walked a few steps, entered the terminal and quickly got on our plane for a one hour flight to Toronto. Once in Toronto, we had to take a bus to the International Terminal. The driver thought he was auditioning for the Detroit Grand Prix as he meandered the bus through one zigzag after another for a distance that seemed longer than the flight we just took. I should have known that I was in trouble when we entered the terminal and discovered the air conditioning did not work. Hungarians are known for being chain smokers. True to their reputation, the gate area was so thick with smoke it made a grown man cry, me. Finally, after a lengthy delay, we were allowed to board our Malev Hungarian Airline plane. Finally I thought we were ready to leave, but wait, one passenger did not board. We all had to wait, and wait, and wait. Finally the crew gave up and after over an hour, we took off. The flight was uneventful until the pilot decided to conserve his tires and land in Budapest using just the wheels on one side of the plane. After a lot of screaming from the passengers who had paid full fare, he relented and put the other side of the plane down and we came to a quick stop. Welcome to Hungary.

This penchant for conserving, quickly became an observed pattern. Many of the cars in Budapest are very old. Tiny Fiats, Ladas (Russian Fiats), Lancias, etc., with faded paint, windows that don't work and exhaust systems held together with wire, and a prayer are everywhere. Yes, since the end of communism, religion is flourishing. The Catholic Church has taken over the public school system because the government does not have enough money to operate it.

Nothing was more startling to us than the Hungarian economy. Soon to be part of the European Union, with a common currency, today the Forint is the official currency. I say official because in some places in Hungary, including the Budapest Airport International Terminal, items are priced in the German Deutschmarks. In Hungary it is said that with communism, everyone had money, but the stores had nothing to sell. Today, the stores are filled with goods, but no one has the money to buy ... except the tourists, who find many things quite cheap compared to home. Getting used to converting Forints into dollars was difficult. It averaged about 238 Forint per dollar. The big question then was what does a Forint buy? For example, a Whopper Value Meal, ok, yes, we did stop there once, costs 580 Forint or less than \$2.50! A wonderful dinner for two in a nice restaurant costs 2,800 Forint, or less than \$12.00! That is for two, and tipping more than 10% is con-



Kal Engelberg enjoys the sightseeing on his trip to Hungary.

sidered boorish. I found myself doing it anyway when we had a particularly helpful waiter or cab driver. Yes, they have cabs, and buses, and streetcars and a very efficient subway system where you can travel from one end of the city to the other for 90 Forint (38 cents). A large loaf of bread costs the same-90 Forint.

Sounds great, but now to the other side of the economy. What do people make and where does the money go? An average gross salary is about 70,000 Forint per month which is less than \$300. I said it was gross. A liter of gas costs 200 Forint. That means a tank of gas costs about \$35 which is more than 10% of the gross monthly salary of the average Joe. Pray your car does not break down and you need to rent one for a day or two. We pay 33,000 Forint per day for a two-day

continued next page



# Employee of the Month



**Vilisa Carson**

Vilisa Carson became a well-known figure among Oakland County employees after she was honored at L. Brooks Patterson's State of the County Address. While working as a custodial worker II in the courthouse, she found a torn five-dollar bill, and through a little extra effort, she put the bill back together, and returned it to its rightful owner.

After Mr. Patterson spoke about her honesty, she was presented with 50 five-dollar bills in appreciation of her hard work and integrity.

After this event, her supervisor Gary Walker nominated her for the Employee of the Month award. In his statement, he said "Vilisa is a great worker, she always does an excellent job, has excellent attendance, and will always work extra when we are short handed."

Vilisa has worked for Oakland County for nine years and recently transferred to the Clerk/Register of Deeds office.

Vilisa lives in Pontiac with her two children, fourteen year old Pauletta, and her six year old son Solomon. She is active as the financial secretary in her church and enjoys working in her children's school activities. She attends Baker College where she is receiving high tech training for a career in computers.

**Judy Freed**



Judy has worked at Oakland County for almost 30 years. She is a clerk III in the Horticulture Department of MSU extension. Many people enjoy horticulture, also known as the gardening of small plants and flowers, as a summer hobby, but Judy works hard year round to help people who take it a little more seriously. "This job is full of diversity. I work with incredible people who really enjoy their job, and that really makes it easier." Judy explains. Her supervisor, Wayne Nierman, agrees.. "Judy makes it a pleasant working atmosphere. She is great with the plants and makes the job easier for all of us."

Judy lives in White Lake with her husband of nine years, Michael, who is also an Oakland County employee at the Drain Commissioner's Office. Together they have a nine-year-old son who plays roller hockey. Judy loves to cheer him on as well as being an active member in the schools.

She also enjoys taking work home with her to do some gardening.

more EMPLOYEES on page 12

## Going Home from page 8

rental. Yes it was an automatic, and it still had its new paint, but my two-day rental came to 66,000 Forint! A nights stay at a very nice, (not luxury by our standards) hotel costs 10-15,000 Forint (\$40-60) per night. No matter where you stay, be sure to bring toilet paper from home. At the nicest place, it resembles medium to fine grain sandpaper. Printed across the sheets it lets you know it is recycled. Recycled what, I never found out. Remember the pilot and the wheels?

Once you get over the huge disparity of wealth, Hungary is a beautiful country, with wonderful, friendly people. How could I say anything else? It is the land of my wife's birth, and besides, they named a large public square with its own subway stop after me, Kalvin, that's Kalvin with a "K". Few adults spoke English, but I had my wife as my own personal interpreter. The Opera House is magnificent, as well as the Parliament Building located right on the Danube, which has been beautifully restored after it was all but destroyed in the Second World War. There is so much to see, we decided to save some things for our next trip.

A four-hour express train ride from Budapest brought us to the beautiful town and house where my wife was raised. It was very emotional ... for me. It gave me a sense of connection I had never felt before. The City Center where she grew up is beautifully restored, from the 100-year old hotel where we stayed, to the churches and city hall. The courthouse and jail were undergoing major renovations with a large section having been torn down just before we arrived. Her school and library were gone, but the park she visited in a nearby town was still there, flower beds and all. I can go see the house where I was raised whenever I want. It is only a few miles away, and I drive by quite often. For my wife, it was a journey that took her over 40 years to complete. For me, it was going home, for the very first time.

One final thought. Once in the air, on our return flight home, we discovered that it was the very same pilot, "Captain Wheels" himself. Fortunately we landed smoothly in Toronto. For the first time in my life I wanted to kiss the ground after I got off the plane. Yes, we had landed safely, but more importantly, I was back home in America. Now perhaps for the first time I understand, God Bless America.

## the Telegraph

Published every three months by

### Office of Media & Communications

Executive Office Building  
1200 North Telegraph Road  
Pontiac, MI 48341-0409  
Phone: (248) 858-1048  
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We welcome and encourage you to send us your articles, photographs, suggestions and comments. Mail, fax, phone or e-mail them to:

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**Printing:** Sanders Printing & the Oakland County Print Shop



# kudos celebrations com

## kudos

**Janette McKenna** from InfoTech earned a Masters Degree in Information Systems Management from Ferris State University with a 4.0 GPA.

**Anita Tewillager** of InfoTech earned her Bachelors Degree in Business Administration in 12/99.

**David Veit** of InfoTech earned his Bachelors Degree in Business Administration in 12/99.

**Penny Peters** of InfoTech earned her Bachelors Degree in Community Development in 10/99.

**Cathy Appleton** of InfoTech earned her Associates Degree in Liberal Arts in 4/00.

**Diane Castle** of the Assignment Clerk's Office earned her Bachelors Degree in Social Work.

## fond farewells

**George Bondi** retired on 3/3/00 from the Drain Commissioner's Engineering & Construction Division after 25 years of service.

**Kristina Hedges** of Engineering Support at Operations & Maintenance division of the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division resigned on 3/10/00

**Earl Olsen** retired as chief of the Heating Plant unit of FM&O after 29 years of service on 4/14/00.

**Robert Curtis**, maintenance supervisor II, retired from the Maintenance unit of FM&O after 24 years of service on 4/14/00.

**Bob Olko** from InfoTech retired on 3/31/00 after 26 years of service.

## new hires

**Neil Cooper** was hired as an alarm installer in the Safety Unit of the FM&O Division on 3/6/00

**Michael Olds** was hired as a student engineer for the Tech Support Unit of Facilities Management Division on 1/31/00

**Charlotte Sabins** was hired as a general helper for the Water Maintenance Unit of the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division on 2/14/00.

**Bennard Miller** was hired as a student for Engineering Support at the Drain Commissioner's Operation & Maintenance Division on 2/14/00

**Jeff Holler** was hired as an environmental planner in the Drain Commissioner's Engineering & Construction Division on 3/13/00

**Rima Raouf** was hired as a civil engineer I in the Drain Commissioner's Engineering & Construction Division on 3/13/00

**Cheryl Macias** was hired as a general helper in the custodial unit of FM&O on 4/17/00

**Janina Macioszek** was hired as a custodial worker II in the custodial unit of FM&O on 4/10/00

**Crystal Cooley** was hired as a general helper in the Custodial Unit of FM&O on 5/1/00

**Lyndon Hillie** was hired as a general helper in the Custodial Unit of FM&O on 5/8/00

**Jeff Long** was hired as an application analyst programmer at InfoTech on 4/24/00

**Greg Galligan** was hired as a GIS enterprise data technician at InfoTech on 5/15/00

**Sue Proksch** was hired as an application analyst programmer at InfoTech on 3/13/00

**Cody Sites** was hired as a receptionist at InfoTech on 2/24/00.

**Keri Johnson**, a senior at Manley high School was welcomed as the new co-op at the Assignment Clerks Office

**Paul J. Blanzky** was hired as an airport maintenance mechanic II in Aviation on 4/24/00

## promotions

**Alan Wirebaugh** was promoted on 4/8/00 from maintenance laborer to pump maintenance mechanic I from the SOCSDS at the Drain Commissioner's Operation & Maintenance Division.

**Jerome Silagyi** from Engineering Support was promoted on 3/11/00 from civil engineer II to civil engineer III at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division.

**Robert Aubin** was promoted on 10/9/99 from construction inspector II to construction inspector III in Sewer Drain Maintenance at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division.

**Rodney Ricklefs** was promoted on 1/31/00 from general helper PTNE to maintenance laborer-drain FTE in Sewer Drain Maintenance at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division.

**David Ciavattone** of Electronics was promoted to skilled maintenance mechanic III at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division on 2/12/00

**Ronni Spencer** of Water Maintenance was promoted to maintenance laborer at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division on 3/25/00

**Loretta Davis-Brazil** of Water Maintenance was promoted to typist I at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division on 3/25/00.

**Rick Devisch** was promoted on 2/26/00 from civil engineer I to civil engineer II at the Drain Commissioner's Engineering & Construction Division.

**Madelyn Thomas** was promoted on 2/26/00 from typist II to clerk III on the Drain Commissioner's Inspection Department.

**Dan Bowels** was promoted on 2/26/00 to general maintenance mechanic in the Maintenance Division of FM&O

**Ed Joss** was promoted on 3/11/00 to engineering aide II in Tech Support at Facilities Management.



# ning & going swap shop

**Gregg Doty** was promoted on 1/15/00 to facilities engineering supervisor at the Facilities Engineering Unit of Facilities Maintenance.

**Carmelo Moyet** was promoted 8/28/99 to construction inspector III at the Facilities Engineering Unit of Facilities Management.

**Fred Millard** was promoted to maintenance supervisor I in the maintenance unit of FM&O on 4/22/00

**Gina Bohn** was promoted to supervisor of administrative services in the administrative unit at FM&O on 3/25/00.

**Sean Washington** was promoted to maintenance laborer in the maintenance unit of FM&O on 4/22/00.

**Henry Roehl Jr.** was promoted to chief of the heating plant in the Heating unit of FM&O on 4/22/00

**Carol Pote** was promoted to mobile unit custodial worker in the custodial unit of FM&O on 5/600

**Lee Bagley** was promoted to groundskeeper specialist in the Grounds unit of FM&O on 12/4/99

## transfers

**Cynthia Morales** transferred from the Clerk's office to the Mediation Department in the Assignment Clerk's Office.

**Annette Metrick** transferred from Equalization to InfoTech as the new procurement technician on 5/15/00.

**Jacline Branford-Scribner** transferred from FM&O to InfoTech as a DP equipment operator on 5/6/00.

## marriages

**John Graham** of the Sheriff's Dept. and **Katherine Bryant** of Planning & Economic Research were married on 4/10/00 in Miami, FL aboard the Splendor of the Seas.

## births

**Terry Ritchie** of Pump Maintenance at the Drain Commissioner's Operations & Maintenance Division and his wife Danielle had their new baby girl Gabrielle on 2/8/00.

**Holly Conforti** of Fiscal Services and her husband Vince welcomed their first child Vincent Eugene on 3/15/00.

**Guy Compton** of InfoTech and his wife Connie had their second baby Guy Jr. on 5/2/00.

## other

**Michelle Shannon** in the Assignment Clerk's Office was recently engaged to Eric Sawyer. Their wedding is planned for 9/8/01.

**Karla Early** and **Michelle Shannon** would like to give a big thank you to all who participated in the pre-walk activities for the March Of Dimes. The Circuit Court raised 1,800 dollars.

## for sale

1990 16' Sylvan Super Snapper, Deep V with live well, 15 horse electric start Yamaha motor. Excellent condition. Boat, motor & trailer: \$3,950. Call Dave at 373-0444 at home or at 80527 at work.

## on the move

Risk Management and Safety has moved. Our new address is 2805 Pontiac Lake Road, Suite 2A, Waterford, MI 48328-2656. We are located on the south side of Pontiac Lake Road, just east of Scott Lake Road. However, you will still be able to use inter-departmental mail.

We also have a new directory on the County's department-shared ("O") drive. It contains forms such as the County Property Loss Report and the Incident Report. Please note that these forms will be revised periodically and early next year they will be modified so that you may complete them on the computer.

You will also find useful information such as the list of approved clinics for work related injuries, notary bond application procedures, the bootmobile schedule and the policy and procedures for the County's random drug testing program.

If you have questions regarding anything on our directory, please feel free to contact us. We also encourage you to contact us with any suggestions on how we can improve our directory or what we can add that would be useful to County employees.

## free

Free decorative white landscaping stones. Call Dee at 858-5400 or 623-7414.

## 2000 Totals

\$11,786.60

65

73%

Casual Day Fund

ESP Suggestions

Direct Deposit



# Employee of the Month



## Carol Ann Hart

While most of us are sleeping, there are special people at Oakland County who work late at night taking care of the residents at the Medical Care facility. Carol Ann Hart is one of them.

She is a general staff nurse as well as a RN. For almost 11 years she has been with Oakland County. Carol explains "I

love my patients, and I love the satisfaction of doing good for others."

Director of Nursing Candace Otte-Ingram says, "There is so much to tell about Carol. She is a devoted nurse with much experience. She is a strong advocate for the residents." She completes many tasks at Medical Care, from resident care to talking to families and organizing conferences.

Carol lives with Howard, her husband of 38 years. Together they have 5 grown children. Her hobbies include gardening and re-finishing furniture. She especially loves to read.



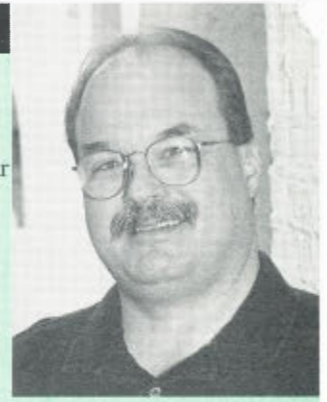
## Zenobia Green

There are many friendly faces at Oakland County's Medical Care Facility. Zenobia Green is one of them. "Zenobia is consistently compassionate with care, she puts the need of the residents first, and does it in a cheerful manor." Candace Otte-Ingram, the Director of Nursing at Medical Care explains. Zenobia is a nurse

assistant and has been with Oakland County for 13 years. She does total care of the residents, helping them with whatever they need. She enjoys it because she calls herself a "people-person". "I like people, I love to talk and laugh with them." Zenobia says.

Zenobia has many hobbies. She loves to peruse the mall for some shopping and window shopping, and going to casinos for a little risk taking. When she wants to do something a little more relaxing you will find her perched near a lake with a fishing pole in her hands. She lives in Pontiac with her husband of over 30 years, Robert. She is also the mother of six children.

## Randall Smithling



Cars are a big part of Randy Smithling's life, whether he's working on them at Vehicle Operations or fixing up an old car at home. Employed 3 years at Oakland County as parts manager, Randy loves coming to work everyday. He loves everything about his job, the challenges and the staff. "It's a real positive working place." Randy says. He was recently given the task of coordinating the installation of the new MPC system in 700 police cars across Oakland County. This new system features small computers in the police cars of many of the municipalities across the county for more improved and easier data for police officers. Todd Birkle, one of Randy's supervisors says, "He has a real strong work ethic. Every morning he comes to work with a smile. He is always ready to dig in and get going. He accepts new responsibilities with much enthusiasm."

At home, Randy lives with his wife of 25 years Sharon and his eleven-year-old son A.J. Besides his love for old cars, he enjoys bass fishing out on the lakes and gardening.

## Susan Ruehle



Public Health Educator Susan Ruehle is definitely playing her part in saving lives of children at risk. How does she do that? She educates parents on the importance of properly purchasing and using child car seats. She has been with Oakland County for three and a half years at the Health Division. Susan developed the Safe Ride for Kids program where she answers questions about different brands of seats, recommends which one is right for different children, and shows parents how to properly install the seats. Sal Najera said, "Sue has received many letters of support and commendation from organizations and individuals about her work. Four residents have called her to say that their seats, which were inspected or replaced by this program, were involved in a serious accident and none of the children were injured or killed and this includes one child in a van that rolled over three times."

Susan loves her job because she sees instant results. When Susan is not out saving lives, she enjoys golfing and going up north on vacation. She recently married her husband Kevin in November of 1999.