

# Pay raises likely under board's Christmas tree

By TOM LONERGAN

Christmas may come two weeks early for Oakland County's elected officials.

The 27 members of the Board of Commissioners on Thursday will consider 8 1/2 percent raises for themselves and six countywide elected officials, 14 circuit court judges and an estimated 3,000 other county employees.

Total cost of the increases, which will be included in the county's 1981 budget, is \$3.5 million.

The raises would take effect Jan. 1.

**IF APPROVED** as expected, the pay hikes would increase County Executive, Daniel T. Murphy's annual salary to \$87,516 and the circuit judges' pay to \$58,900.

Next highest would be Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson at \$52,653 next year.

The raises, proposed by the Murphy administration, were recommended for county board approval Wednesday by the personnel committee.

The 8 1/2 percent increase for commissioners, who are prohibited by law to vote themselves raises during their current terms in office, would last two years. New terms for the commissioners begin in January.

The part-time commissioners would receive \$13,715 next year and in 1982, a \$1,074 increase over their current salaries. County Board Chairman Wallace Gabler, R-Royal Oak, would be paid \$14,934 and vice-chairwoman Lilian Moffitt, R-Birmingham, \$14,324.

A county board finance committee recommendation of separate 8 percent increases for the commissioners in both 1981 and 1982 failed in the personnel committee.

**TWO COUNTY** board Democrats, James Doyon of Madison Heights and Hubert Price of Pontiac, opposed the raises, but for different reasons.

Doyon said he opposed increasing elected officials' salaries in general.

Price, chairman of the county Democratic Caucus, said, "In all candor, if we had a reasonable chance of more than 8 1/2 percent, I'd be the first to make the motion."

Commissioner Paul Kasper, R-Bloomfield Hills, who supported the raises in committee with Republicans Moffitt, John McDonald of Farmington Hills, Henry Hood of Bloomfield Township and Robert Gorsline of Milford.

**St. Jude benefit**

The board of directors of the greater Detroit chapter of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital will hold its annual holiday gala at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 15, at the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills.

Reservation can be made by sending a check for \$16.50 per person to The Committee-ALSAC, 9339 W. Fort St., Detroit 48209.

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# Safety should be holiday priority

By MAURIE WALKER

The holiday season is a time for fun but it is also a time to take extra safety precautions.

With Christmas trees, candles, wrappings and various decorations in the home, the chance of fire becomes more pronounced.

Each year fire departments are called to homes where fires have started because necessary precautions weren't taken with the decorations.

Fire officials say one of the big hazards at this time of year is having lighted candles near trees or flammable material. Even with artificial trees, there is the danger of lights overheating or a short in the wiring.

One of the hazards is the use of lights that are not Underwriters Laboratories approved, according to fire officials.

The National Board of Fire Underwriters warns that electric wiring should be able to handle the extra load. Check to see if the lights dim or the television picture shrinks when appliances are turned on, and be certain an experienced electrician has brought the home wiring up to code, the National Board advises.

"Regularly inspect all electrical cords for fraying, knots, cracked insulation or bare wires. They should be discarded if deemed unsafe" is the

board's warning.

"There are some lights on the market that are less expensive but can prove to be dangerous since they are not inspected," say fire marshalls.

Candles should never be burned within the range of children or near material easily gone up in smoke.

**BURNING EVERGREENS** in the fireplace is another hazard. When dry, greens burn like tinder. Their flames can flare out of control, sending sparks flying about a room.

Fire officials say statistics show that 13.9 percent of the fires are caused by faulty electrical wires or appliances.

A year-round problem that is accentuated during the holidays is the careless smoker.

A good many homes have at least one person who smokes, either a family member or a regular visitor.

It is easy for a hot ash to be knocked off a cigarette or cigar, or for a cigarette, cigar or pipe to be left in an ash tray where the ashes might fall onto the carpet, a table or behind the cushion of a sofa or a chair.

"A smoker, no matter how careful, has had this happen at least once," fire marshalls say.

There is an added threat when a persons smokes near an evergreen.

Trees should be placed away from fireplaces, radiators, or other heat

sources and should never be in the traffic pattern or block a doorway.

Fire officials suggest real trees be mounted in a sturdy, water-holding stand with wide-spread legs. The base holder should regularly be filled with water.

**CHRISTMAS WRAPPINGS**, another fire hazard, should always be disposed of immediately after opening.

Trash should be placed in a metal container. Never burn wrappings in the fireplace, they may ignite suddenly and cause a flash fire.

**FIRE OFFICIALS** warn that an emergency can strike at any time.

"Keep fire department, police, ambulance, doctor and other emergency service numbers posted on or near the telephone. Keep a UL listed multi-purpose fire extinguisher in the kitchen while preparing holiday meals, and learn how to use it."

Other precautions issued by fire departments is that at least one member of the family should be familiar

with simple first aid procedures.

Lights on trees and decorations should be turned off when the family retires for the night or leaves the house.

Two escape routes for each room in the house should be mapped out and family members made aware of the exits. A pre-planned meeting place should be established outside where all members will report as soon as possible should they have to escape from a fire.

Children should never be left at home alone, even for a short time. Fire spreads rapidly, allowing little time to escape. Without adult supervision, children may panic and be trapped in the house.

Simple precautions can make the holidays happy.

**Seasonal changes are to be enjoyed**

Construction of snow shelters, such as the quinzee, are among the outdoor public-interpretive programs offered by Oakland County Parks naturalist Kathleen Dougherty this winter.

Moonlight cross country ski touring, animal tracking on this and a primer course on Nordic skiing safety are also among the programs she'll offer nature lovers.

"Seasonal changes are part of living in Michigan that should be enjoyed," says naturalist Dougherty. "Just because it's winter it doesn't mean you have to sit indoors."

"As long as you are aware of the adjustment of your body physiology to the

cold, you should enjoy recreating outside during winter months," she says.

Like the Oakland County Parks motto, "Around the year, we're right here," Dougherty is an all-season naturalist.

Throughout the year, she offers nature programs to the public on a range of subjects from outdoor exhibits, to nature photography, to winter shelters and camping, and more.

"Outdoor activities are a mental uplift," says Dougherty. "Maybe it's because we are alienated from the outdoors. People walk away with a better attitude once they have done something outdoors."

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