

# Dems ask suit in closed-door case

By Carol Axelson  
staff writer

Democratic Oakland County Commissioners are threatening to go to court to challenge the right of their Republican colleagues to meet behind closed doors.

Democrats said they'll consider taking legal action because the Oakland County prosecutor evaded the issue and failed to give a "definitive ruling" on the matter.

"It's a case of when in doubt punt," said Commissioner James A. Doyon, D-Madison Heights. "That's what the prosecutor did — he passed the football to someone else."

"Now we'll have to go to court, and that's going to embarrass the board of commissioners."

Democrats took their first step last Thursday by asking the board to approve hiring outside legal counsel to represent them in the case. Their resolution was referred to the finance committee.

At issue is whether Republicans violated the state's open meetings law when they barred the press, public and

Democratic commissioners from their caucus meeting last month.

Democrats claim Republicans did not have a legal right to exclude them from the meeting. Republicans, on the other hand, contend the law permits them to meet behind closed doors to discuss personnel matters.

"THEY WERE discussing a proposal to cut back the number of sheriff's deputies by the same percentage that they're awarded in salary increases by an arbitrator."

Republican Caucus Chairman John E. Olsen of Huntington Woods has denied charges that discussion centered around more layoffs in the sheriff's department. He contended the meeting was legal and "aboveboard."

When Republicans repeatedly refused to divulge the subject of the meeting, Democrats took their complaints to the prosecutor's office.

Chief Assistant Prosecutor Richard Thompson responded last week by say-

ing the state's Open Meetings Act doesn't specifically address the issue.

"We feel the contradictions and ambiguities (in the act) leave us no alternative but to wait for a court decision with statewide jurisdiction to settle the question," Thompson said.

Under the law, "public bodies" — boards, commissions, committees and councils — are allowed to bar the public from meetings dealing with negotiations. But it's unclear whether partisan caucuses are considered "public bodies" under the act, Thompson said.

He claimed that partisan caucuses don't "fit within the act's definition of public body" and on that basis would not be covered by the act.

An attorney general's opinion, issued in 1978, disputes Thompson's claim. It says partisan caucuses of county boards of commissioners are covered by the act.

But Thompson told the board: "I am sure you are aware that an attorney general's opinion is not a binding interpretation of the law on anyone but state agencies."

EVEN IF the partisan caucus were

considered a public body under the act, the law doesn't preclude the caucus from excluding members of the other political party to discuss negotiations, Thompson said.

Commissioner Alexander Perinoff, D-Southfield, believes the prosecutor "clearly evaded the issue."

Perinoff admits, however, that Democrats probably won't make much headway with a court case.

"We're in a hell of a position," Perinoff said. "Even if we try to challenge it in court, we have to ask the county to foot the bill. Republicans will never vote for the expense of hiring an attorney to challenge the open meetings act."

"And, even if they give us the money, the county executive can still veto it."

However, Democrats have another way out, Doyon said. "If we don't go to court, we can take the case to the attorney general and hope he'll prosecute."

"That would be the least costly alternative," Doyon said. "I think he'd take on the case since he's already gone on record saying partisan caucuses are covered by the law."

## Oakland Bar turns teacher for week

Oakland County lawyers will sponsor seminars and conduct mock trials in local schools to mark Law Week, which begins May 1.

Purpose is to call attention to the principles and practice of American law and justice, said Jane Smith, executive director of the Oakland County Bar Association.

The first law day was declared by the American Bar Association on May 1, 1957. Since President Dwight D. Eisenhower designated May 1, 1958 as Law Day in America, bar associations

across the country have sponsored special events to mark the occasion.

EVENTS INCLUDE:

• Social Security, Know Your Rights — Attorneys Kenneth F. Laritz and Peter N. Dowd will discuss this topic 7-9 p.m. Monday, May 1, in the Oak Park Community Center, 14500 Oak Park Boulevard.

• Divorce — The new Friend of the Court Act will be discussed by Oakland County Circuit Judge Steven N. Andrews from 7-9 p.m. Monday, May 2, in

the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium, Pontiac.

• Essay Awards — The Oakland County Bar Auxiliary will give essay contest awards to seventh, eighth and ninth graders at a noon luncheon Monday, May 2 in the Main Event Ballroom, Pontiac Silverdome.

• Home Ownership — James Clark, chairman of the board of First Federal Savings of Oakland, and attorneys Thomas C. Simpson and Mark Weston Lyon will speak 7-9 p.m. Tues-

day, May 3 at the Oak Park Community Center.

A. Richard Reising, vice president of Community National Bank and attorneys Peter A. Nathan and Mark W. Lyon will speak on the same subject 7-9 p.m. Thursday, May 5, at the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium.

Mock trials will be conducted at local schools, including West Hills Junior High in West Bloomfield, Berkshire Jr. High in Birmingham, Van Housen Jr. High in Rochester and East Middle School in Farmington.

Monday, April 25, 1983 O&E

(O&A)

## FREE COLOR CATALOG

25 year guarantee  
on all pressure  
treated wood parts

Delivery  
and installation  
available



the wooden swing co.

4336 No. Woodward Ave., Dept. E, Royal Oak, MI 48072  
(313)549-2828

America's largest seller of Swing Design products

## BERLITZ



Jeff Holdorf

"I'm Looking For 6  
People Who Want  
To Speak Spanish  
Or French  
By July 4... For  
Just \$28 A Week."

Enroll today in our group language programs and we'll have you speaking Spanish, French, German or Italian by July 4. Group lessons are an effective, low cost way to learn. And, because we use the world famous Berlitz Method, you progress quickly and easily. Call today and get the satisfaction of knowing you'll be speaking your new language in just 10 short weeks.

Call BERLITZ Today

Bingham Ctr., Suite 1660, 30700 Telegraph Rd., Birmingham  
642-9335

## CORRECTION

An advertisement for Comerica Bank which appeared in the Observer & Eccentric on April 21, 1983 was incorrect. The advertisement featured an interest rate of 11.99 annual percentage rate for a new car loan, which no longer is in effect. The current annual percentage rate is 12.90 percent. We regret any inconvenience this advertisement may have caused any customer of Comerica Bank.

## SOFT-FAIRE '83

Personal Computer  
Exposition for  
Home and School

Thursday, May 5, Noon to 8 PM  
Roma's of Bloomfield  
Telegraph, north of  
Square Lake Road

- Scores of computer/program exhibits
- Student demonstrations
- Seminars on selecting and using computers
- Touche Ross Invitational Computer Competition with finalists from Computer Contest League of Oakland County

• Admission, \$3,  
Seminar Fee, \$2 each

Seminar Registration, Exhibition/  
Vendor's or General Information,  
Call 858-1895

Sponsored by Oakland Schools Interactive  
& Instructional Computing Department

Dr. David A. Kirsch  
Dr. James M. Dankovich  
announce the  
establishment of a  
Family Chiropractic  
at the  
Birmingham Chiropractic Clinic, P.C.  
1173 South Adams Road  
Birmingham, Michigan 48011  
Hours  
M-W-F 9-5  
T-Th-Sat. 9-1  
Telephone  
(313) 644-0495

introduces  
Our Biggest Sale in History  
WINDOW SHADE CO.

STOREWIDE SAVINGS 20% - 75%  
On Window Treatments and Wallpaper

FREE AT  
GREENWOOD  
WINDOW SHADE  
• FREE Freight - no handling charges  
• FREE Telephone with paper purchase of \$500.00 or more (400 value)  
• FREE Measure - Must bring old into store to set up appointment (\$15.00 value)

FREE Long Distance  
Phone call anywhere in  
continental U.S.A. (That  
M.C.I. reaches)  
MCI  
The long distance phone co.  
WEST BLOOMFIELD  
SHOWROOM ONLY

FREE AT  
PHONE WORKS  
• Extended Warranty • Ex-  
clusive Loaner Guarantee  
Special SALE HOURS at W. Bloomfield Show Room  
OLD ORCHARD  
4823 Orchard Ln., N.E.  
Bloomfield Center  
Mon.-Sat. 10-6, Thurs. 10-8  
625-3400

DETROIT  
Mon.-Sat. 10-6, Thurs. 10-8  
744-8822  
Mon.-Sat. 10-6, Thurs. 10-8  
744-8822  
Thurs. 10-6, 10-8  
744-8822

## YOU CAN SPEAK A NEW LANGUAGE IN A SNAP

### USING THE DARTMOUTH INTENSIVE METHOD

- Enables students to use the language quickly
- Reduces students' inhibitions
- Requires little out of class preparation
- Creates an enjoyable classroom experience

May 2-July 20, 1983

Two evenings weekly, 6-9 p.m., Mon./Wed. or Tues./Thurs.

Three Locations:

Berkshire Middle School, Birmingham  
University of Detroit  
McNichols Campus  
Southfield High School  
Southfield

MAIL ENROLLMENT FORM - Return to:

University of Detroit  
Division of Continuing Professional Education  
4001 West McNichols Road  
Detroit, Michigan 48221 (313) 927-1025

FEE: \$340.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check Language: French \_\_\_\_\_ German \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish \_\_\_\_\_

Arabic \_\_\_\_\_ Italian \_\_\_\_\_ Japanese \_\_\_\_\_

English for Foreign Professionals

An exceptional value,  
just in time for Mother's Day.

the  
CHARLES W. WARREN  
DIAMOND HEART  
PENDANT

• \$395. •

A PRICE FAR BELOW  
CURRENT MARKET VALUE

• OUR EXCLUSIVE DIAMOND HEART •

Crafted with meticulous attention to detail,  
this pendant is a beautiful blending of quality and value. The 18 diamonds,  
specially selected for their fine cut, are carefully set in a 14k gold  
mounting with a lovely 16", 14k gold chain.

• OUR SPECIAL LOW PRICE •

Two extremely practical factors make this remarkably  
low price possible. First, we buy diamonds and other precious stones  
in very large quantities, making our cost per stone lower than most retailers  
must pay. We also created the mounting in our own factory. In addition to  
sharing these savings with you, we have sharply reduced the retail price of our  
beautiful pendant to help make your spring gift-giving unforgettable. Quan-  
tities are limited. (Photo enlarged.) Use our convenient charge or we  
welcome American Express, Visa or MasterCard.

APRIL 24-MAY 7

CHARLES W. WARREN  
JEWELERS SINCE 1901

BOMBEET MALL, TROY, 619-3411  
NORTHLAND-EASTLAND-WESTLAND-BRIARWOOD-LAKESIDE  
FAIRLANE-TWELVE OAKS-OAKLAND