

## Auto unit tests driver sobriety

By Tom Henderson  
Staff writer

An Oakland County judge may be the first in the state to order drunk drivers as part of their probation to install Breathalyzer units on their cars, which hook into the ignition. If the drivers can't prove their sobriety, they can't start their cars.

Judge James Sheehy of the third division of the 52nd District Court in Rochester Hills thinks the practice will spread among the judiciary, but at least some fellow judges are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

"About 80 percent of our cases are drinking related," said Sheehy, who has ordered the devices five times since July 1 in cases involving repeat offenders. "They call district court the drinking court. Nearly all our cases are drinking related, whether it's assault and batteries, domestic trouble, larcenies while drunk or to support drinking habits, minors in possession or drunk driving."

"Yesterday, for example, there were pleas of guilty to eight or nine drunk-driving offenses. . . . In our community, the biggest problem is underage drinking and driving. All you have to do is go down to the corner and the kids are there drinking Canadian beer. Stroh's isn't good enough for them."

SHEEHY SAID the Breathalyzer devices are the same as those used by local police, with the exception that they hook into the car's ignition. He said they are marketed by a Colorado firm, Guardian Interlock Systems Inc. Sheehy said that while he thinks he is the first judge in Michigan to order their use, they are also in use by courts in Cincinnati, Day-



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— Judge James Sheehy

ton and Maryland.

Sheehy said the cost of units is \$456 a year, including lease fees, paper work, and periodic checks to recalibrate them and make sure they haven't been tampered with. He said the guilty pay those costs as part of their probation.

"I'm not going to say everybody (who is guilty of drunk driving) should get one. That's not right," said Sheehy. "They're for people with two or more convictions who probably shouldn't be driving at all, but in light of their work situation you want them to keep their job and protect society at the same time."

Sheehy predicted the use of the devices would become widespread. He said more courts would begin ordering their use, parents would have them installed on the family car to make sure their kids don't drive while intoxicated and that companies would put them on company cars to reduce their liability.

ton, Brang said. "I've been a judge for more than 17 years, now, and for every death case by way of murder, I see 20 cases where drunks have killed people. The real problem in Redford is not the guy with a gun. It's the drunk driving down the street with two tons of metal. He's our killer."

JUDGE ROBERT BRZEZINSKI of the 16th District Court in Livonia doubts the machines will be effective.

"It just sounds like someone selling something to me," he said Friday. "What's to stop someone who's been drinking from paying someone a buck or two to blow in it for him?"

"And I don't know what the ramifications are as far as expenses. I don't know if it does any damage to the car. At this point I don't know without studying it further. As I say, there are other things you have to take into consideration."

Brzezinski will get a chance to study it further next week when the state district court judges have their annual meeting in Gaylord. According to Sheehy, a representative for Guardian Interlock will make a presentation about the devices.

In the meantime, Brzezinski is skeptical of the need for drunk drivers to drive, anyway.

"You want to know the greatest cure for unemployment?" he asked. "Get 'em into court for sentencing. People who haven't worked for years, the minute you're ready to sentence them, they've suddenly gotten hired yesterday and they need their car. It's amazing."

Anyone wanting information on the Breathalyzer devices can write Guardian Interlock at 1009 Grant Street, Denver, Colo. 80203, or call 1-303-631-6123.

"This is going to be hot," said Sheehy.

He said the devices are color coded — green for safe, yellow for caution and red for no-go. He said the red level can be set at from .05 to .07 percent blood alcohol. In Michigan, a blood-alcohol level of .08 carries a presumption of impaired driving and a level of .10 carries a presumption of drunk driving.

"Alcohol is like a firecracker," said Sheehy. "You don't know when it's going to go off."

JUDGE ROBERT BRANG of the 17th District Court in Redford is one of those waiting and seeing.

"Maybe I'd order it at some point, but for now you have to consider it a novel approach," he said. "I want to wait for more results. You have to consider the costs and the reliability of the instrument. It certainly is something to consider. We're interested in anything that would help."

"Alcohol is the No. 1 drug prob-

## O&E editors win national awards

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers recently won four awards in the National Newspaper Association National Better Newspaper Contest.

Brad Emmons, editor of the sports sections in Livonia, Redford, Westland and Garden City, received second place in sports sections. Emmons has worked at the O&E for nine years.

Jeanne Whittaker, editor of the suburban life editions in Birmingham and West Bloomfield, was awarded third place for lifestyle sections.

Whittaker has been an editor at the O&E for nine years.

Also recognized were the West Bloomfield Eccentric, which received an honorable mention for best use of process color, and Jim Hughes, former editor of the sports sections in Rochester and Troy.

Judith Doner Berne is editor of the West Bloomfield Eccentric. Hughes received an honorable mention in the sports section category. Hughes resigned earlier this year to accept a job in the public relations department at Henry Ford Hospital.

The O&E entries were among more than 5,000 received in the national contest.

## Construction to start next month on 911

Continued from Page 9

would have to be made before it would be effective.

IN OTHER BOARD action, the Economic Development Corp. financing was approved for a \$3.6 million office and retail building project in downtown Rochester.

The 40,000-square-foot building, to be known as the Rochester Galleria,

will be built on Main Street between Second and Third.

Of the \$3.6 million needed for the project, \$3 will be financed by low-cost bonds.

It is estimated that the project will generate 100 permanent jobs.

The general partners in the project are C.W. Schneider of Birmingham and William Mitzelfeld of Rochester.

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## Registration set at OCC

Regular registration for the 1986 fall semester at Oakland Community College will be 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 2-3 according to an alphabetical schedule.

Classes begin Thursday, Sept. 4.

Students may register at any one of the following OCC campus locations: the Auburn Hills Campus in Auburn Hills (853-4200); the Highland Lakes Campus in Union Lake (360-3000); the Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills (471-7500); and the Southeast/Royal Oak Campus in Royal Oak (967-5700).

Applications for the 1986 fall semester are being accepted. New students should contact the admissions counselor at the campus of their choice for a schedule of classes and information on admission procedures.

## OU to host job seminar

A free job opportunities seminar, focusing on the accounting assistant profession, will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 9, by the Oakland University Division of Continuing Education.

To make reservations for the seminar to be held on the Rochester campus, call 380-3120, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., weekdays.

Individuals who seek new careers or need to update office skills, will hear about job opportunities from graduates of Oakland's accounting assistant program. Employers will learn about courses specifically geared to help develop and maintain accounting and financial records for their businesses.

Information about OU's 15-month evening program, starting its fall term on Sept. 22, will be available to participants. Admission to the program is not required to take selected individual courses, providing qualifications are met for the courses.

## DNR issues fishing report

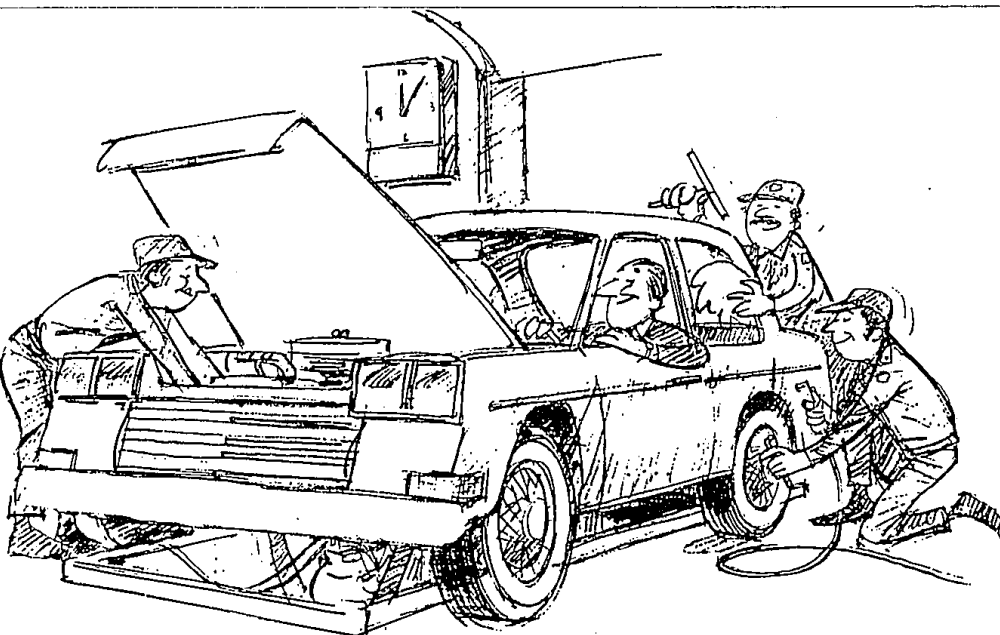
The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, figuring local anglers need all the help they can get to make the most of dwindling day-time fishing, has issued its fishing report for District 14, which is most of southeastern Michigan.

### OAKLAND COUNTY

All Oakland County lakes are yielding fair amounts of panfish. Large largemouth bass and big crappies are hopping in Lower Pettibone Lake.

**MACOMB AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES**

Pike are snapping bait in St. John's Marsh near the northeast shore of Lake St. Clair and good catches of smallmouth bass are being made in Anchor Bay. Harson's Island is the best bet for panfish.



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