

MADD: Police need pat on back

It's 2 a.m. A car is weaving in and out of its lane. The driver is drunk and heading toward an intersection. Would you want to be anywhere near this driver?

Most people agree that individual responsibility must play a role in the problem of drinking and driving. Just as important, in many minds, is the effectiveness of local law enforcement.

To honor those police officers who help ensure safer county roads the Oakland County Chapter of MADD held its first Police Life Savers Awards Banquet, an event which they plan on celebrating annually.

On Oct. 26 at Southfield Charley's, 94 Oakland County police officers were presented with plaques honoring their commitment to combat drunken driving.

"It was really gratifying," said MADD Oakland County Chapter president Greg Bien. "It was a pat on the back, a boost in morale."

The following officers were honored: Robert Peck, Beverly Hills; Jeff Hertel, Bloomfield Township; Terrance Purves, Farmington; John Markey, Farmington Hills; Sgt. Edward Girardot, Franklin; Gregory Palmer, Keego Harbor; Philip Jaskot, Orchard Lake; David Zernow, Rochester; Sgt. Gary Price, Southfield; William McCabe, Troy; Michael Cupp, West Bloomfield.

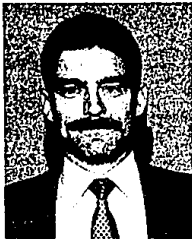
BIEN SAID the dinner was prompted by spouses and families of police officers who felt the officers were not receiving enough support from the public to fight the drunken driving menace.

"The reason for the dinner was to offer positive reinforcement," Bien said.

It is imperative that police officers feel like they are being appreciated by the public because law enforcement plays such a vital role in the crusade against drunken driving, Bien said.

If people did not fear drunken driving arrests, they probably would continue to drink and drive, he explained.

The dinner's guest speaker, U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman, also received a pin and a plaque for his efforts in fighting drunken driving while a district court judge in Oakland County.



Troy's William McCabe was one of a host of county police officers to be honored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

"He took a leadership role," Bien said. "He used intense probation (in sentencing) and was strict with jail sentencing."

BIEN ALSO said the judge held some of his sentencing hearings in schools so students could see the consequences of drunken driving.

Each police department selected the road patrol officer whom it felt best served his or her community by cracking down on drunken drivers. The officers' superiors and co-workers also expressed admiration for the honorees.

"He sees them. He arrests them. He convicts them," said Beverly Hills Police Chief Thomas Good, referring to officer Peck.

Lt. Peter Kauffman of the Birmingham Police Department said officer Manigold has made more than 50 driving while drinking arrests — all with convictions — since early 1987.

Lt. William Kemper of the Southfield Police Department said Sgt. Price represents the team effort of the Traffic Safety Unit, which is made up of five other officers. The team arrested 427 drunken drivers in 1987.

Tests, training for older drivers

Older drivers in Oakland County will be given refresher training by the Traffic Improvement Association.

TIA received a \$32,000 federal grant for the second year of the program. During the first year, 300 drivers over age 50 took part, according to Carol Tomczak, TIA staff member.

Southfield and Waterford will be testing-training sites beginning this week.

"The goal of the workshops is to help senior citizens improve their driving skills and enable them to drive for as long and as safely as possible," she said.

"The TIA workshops are unique because no other driving refresher pro-

gram in the United States offers the opportunity for psycho-physical testing and a behind-the-wheel driving performance measurement," Tomczak said.

TESTS WILL measure brake reaction time, depth perception, glare recovery ability, visual acuity and other factors. Results are known only to participants. No written records are kept, she said.

The schedule:
• Southfield — Today 12:30-4:30 p.m. at Grace Community Center, 21030 Indian. Registration contact: Midge Apple at 356-0760.

• Waterford — Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days, at the parks and recreation building, 5860 Andersonville Road. Registra-

tion contact: Sandy Middleton, 623-0200.
Fee is \$7.

THE COURSE teaches older drivers techniques to compensate for age-related deficiencies. The course was developed by AARP (American Association of Retired Persons).

Research shows that the skills necessary for safe driving begin to deteriorate around age 55. Nevertheless, most older drivers can continue driving safely when they learn to compensate for the physical effects of aging.

The course covers effects of medication, defensive driving techniques, interacting with traffic, adverse driving conditions and accident prevention measures.

Tomczak said the course complies with state regulations for insurance company discounts to graduates of defensive driving courses.

Seniors drive their own cars with an evaluator, who will point out possible problem areas and suggest corrective techniques.

ONE IN FOUR Michigan drivers is 55 or older. By the year 2000, that will increase to one in three. The number of drivers over 75 will increase fastest of all.

Other workshops will be scheduled in Oak Park, Birmingham and Farmington Hills, probably in spring. Groups interested in hosting workshops should contact TIA at 334-4971.

UP spruce is State Capitol pick

A 75-foot Norway spruce from state-owned land in the Upper Peninsula has been selected as Michigan's official holiday tree this year, Gov. James B. Blanchard said.

The tree is on the grounds of the

Newberry Regional Mental Health Center and will be donated by the Michigan Department of Mental Health. The governor and Lansing city officials will light it during the capital city's annual celebration on

Friday, Nov. 18.

The state's official holiday tree was to be cut down "the old-fashioned way" with ax and crosscut saw, last week and stands in front of

the state Capitol building.

A 50-foot Michigan balsam fir from Huron-Manistee National Forest, near Cadillac, will stand in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington this year.

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