

# Student paper sues OU police to gain access to rape report

By C. L. Rugenstein  
staff writer

Censorship is the main issue in a lawsuit to be filed in Oakland County Circuit Court next week by the Oakland University students newspaper against the university police for violating the Michigan Freedom of Information Act.

Jane Briggs-Bunting, a faculty member and newspaper adviser who's also an attorney specializing in media law, is filing the suit for denying information to the university's Oakland Post newspaper about an alleged rape on campus last month.

"It's drafted, we're going (with the suit) period," Briggs-Bunting said. "What we're trying to prove when we go to court is we have the right to that information and it's our decision (whether or not) to print it — not the university's decision to censor us in any way at all."

The rape occurred May 10, but was not reported until May 30 because the student was too frightened, according to a press release from the OU public safety department. The 19-year-old woman said her assailant was waiting in her car after she returned to the northwest parking lot near North and South Foundation halls after a night class, about 10 p.m.

She told police the man forced her to drive to the south central end of campus, where she said he raped her. She also said she thought she'd left the car locked.

"WE DID NOT request the name of the person, it's standard policy not to use the name — we even said they could block it out," Briggs-Bunting said. "But we have the right to all that information."

Citing the Buckley Amendment, also known as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act that infor-

mation about students is private, OU's public safety department withheld the report from the Oakland Post student newspaper. "It's university policy not to release (that information) and that it's protected by the Buckley Amendment to protect students," said Public Safety Director Richard Leonard. "It does not mean the university is withholding information that a crime has been committed."

Briggs-Bunting said that legally the information is open to the public — anyone can ask to see the police reports.

"The community has the right to know, to protect itself, to be aware," she said. The only information they got about the crime was a press release from university spokesman Jim Llewellyn to local media — and they got that from another newspaper.

Llewellyn said he also didn't see a police report, that the information was given to him in a phone call by Public Safety director Richard Leonard.

Post staffers and Briggs-Bunting contend the amendment refers to student academic records only, and there's a specific clause in the amendment excluding campus crime records.

Post editor-in-chief Margaret O'Brien's June 11 editorial dealt with the issue of concealing campus crime and the Buckley Amendment.

She noted part of the amendment that specifically excludes records of a law enforcement unit of an educational agency or institution which are maintained apart from the educational records.

Briggs-Bunting said the Post staff has had an ongoing problem with getting information from the campus police.

"They're against any disclosures at all — if a student gets a parking ticket, is injured in an accident on campus, or even stubs a toe on the sidewalk."

STUDENT JOURNALISTS have begun carrying Freedom of Information requests with them, "all typed out," when they go to check the campus police logs, she said. O'Brien's editorial called for the campus police to "stop treating campus crime as a blemish on their image," and to make information available so students could protect themselves.

The university police are deputized by the Oakland County Sheriff's department but are a separate organization, with felony and misdemeanor arrest powers.

"They have their own interpretation (of the Buckley Amendment) — my legal opinion is that... they're misinterpreting, and we're to the point where I think newspapers have got to fight to get information they have a right to," said Briggs-Bunting.

## Public can hear parks plan

Oakland County voters have a chance to reduce their property taxes this year.

On the Aug. 7 ballot is a proposal to continue the quarter mill levy for Oakland County Parks for 10 years. A second proposal asks for a half mill for one year for development of Orion Oaks County Park.

The second of three public meetings on the proposals is set for 7-8:30

p.m. Tuesday, June 19 at Glen Oaks Golf Course in Farmington Hills.

Renewal of the quarter mill request will cost the owner of a \$90,000 home \$11.25 per year. The half mill proposal, if passed, will cost the same homeowner \$22.50 for the year.

Glen Oaks Golf Course is on 13 Mile Road between Middlebelt and Orchard Lake roads. For more information, call 858-0906.

## County sports camp begins

Oakland County Parks Sports Camp will begin Monday.

Sports Camp will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at Waterford Oaks County Park.

Children ages 8-14 can take advantage of eight, one-week sessions through Aug. 10. The cost is \$65 per child and \$75 for each additional child in a family.

Activities include soccer, football, softball, field hockey, volleyball, tennis, bicycle motocross and swimming at the wave pool.

A Friday field trip includes boat-

ing, fishing, nature activities and a cookout.

Transportation will be provided by Oakland County Parks and Recreation's Mobile Recreation Department. Pick-up sites are scheduled at designated recreation departments throughout the county. Pick-up times will be between 8 and 9:15 a.m. Return times are 3:45 to 5 p.m.

Participants should bring a brown bag lunch Monday through Thursday.

Waterford Oaks Park is on Watkins Lake Road, between Scott Lake and Pontiac Lake roads. For more information, call 858-4945.

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**County chamber holds mixer**

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