

Getting the lowdown on justice

By Judith Doner Barne
staff writer

Tom Landry and Vern Pixley now know that being a policeman in Oakland County is no picnic.

In the few hours Landry spent in a Farmington Hills patrol car the night of Feb. 13, he accompanied police on a bomb run which turned out to be false, on a possible breaking and entering at a residence, on a shoplifting and a possible suicide.

"It was an eye-opening experience," said Landry, president of Ekin Construction Co. in Farmington Hills, "anytime you see how things really work as opposed to the perception."

Pixley, vice president of the Pixley Memorial Chapel in downtown Rochester, was impressed by the sensitivity displayed by the Oakland County Sheriff's Department as it investigated an indecent exposure call outside Rochester Adams High School.

He said his knees became weak as he took in the scene in the "uncuff area" of the Oakland County Jail. "I'm active in my community and as a funeral director I thought I had a pretty good handle on the highs and lows of our society," Pixley said. "I didn't."

LANDRY AND PIXLEY were among three dozen or so participants

in last week's Leadership Oakland exploration of the justice system in Oakland County.

Their experience began, with a shift in a patrol car. Over a two-day period, their education included witnessing alcohol arrest procedures and a Breathalyzer demonstration; hearing about alternative dispute resolution and touring the Oakland County Jail, watching a trial in Oakland County Circuit Court and hearing Probate Judge Joan Young discuss youth crime.

They also learned the differences in outlook their jobs reflect among Oakland County prosecutor Richard Thompson, defense attorney Ronald Kaplovitz and Michigan Department of Corrections probation manager Dan Smith.

"We consider ourselves the representatives of the victim in court," Thompson outlined. "They can't hire an attorney. They're stuck with us. We are the only voice the victim has."

"If I know where the gun is hidden, I don't have to tell anyone," Kaplovitz said. "Our obligation is to our client. That obligation stops short." Kaplovitz explained, in that "I can't help him lie. I can't help him create a fraud."

Probation manager Smith exhibited sympathy for the person sent into the prison system. "Most do more damage to themselves than anyone

else," he said.

HE MADE these points:

- It's important to let people know that good is rewarded and evil is punished.
- People still have a traditional thinking about crime and punishment, even though new forms of incarceration such as electronic monitoring exist.
- Education and families keep people out of crime. The criminal justice system has limited impact.

Thompson disagrees: "I represent the cynical view," Thompson said. "We view ourselves as the bouncers of society. The only way we can really protect society is put the person in prison. The purpose is to punish, incapacitate."

My view is we very seldom get best offenders — it is just the first time they get caught.

Defense attorney Kaplovitz said the average defendant is not reading the papers — he's not deterred by punishment.

What's Leadership Oakland?

About 45 designated leaders from businesses and organizations throughout Oakland County are part of the first-ever Leadership Oakland.

Goals of the program sponsored by the Council of Chambers of Commerce of Oakland County are to:

- Identify potential leaders in Oakland County.
- Provide these potential leaders with an awareness of the issues and resources in the county.
- Develop a format for ongoing communication among emerging and established leaders.
- Encourage these informal leaders to participate in developing the



future support and direction of the county.

Exploring the county's justice system was the sixth of eight sessions. Others are leadership skills, the economy, health and human services, race and ethnic diversity, education, government process and arts and entertainment.

If you own a one-room schoolhouse, call EMU

Eastern Michigan University's College of Education is seeking information about one-room schoolhouses in Michigan to establish an inventory of these "disappearing" landmarks and provide a network for schoolhouse owners.

The survey, funded by the EMU Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa, international education fraternity, the EMU College of Education and the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, needs those with information on one-room schoolhouses in Michigan to complete and return a two-page survey to EMU.

According to Thomas L. Jones, executive director of the Historical Society of Michigan, many one-room schoolhouses have been purchased from private homes, some have been converted into museums, and a few are used by historical societies to provide hands-on, learning experiences for children.

Jones said a 1987 study by the Michigan Department of Education found 21 such schoolhouses still in use by Michigan school districts and added, the survey is an attempt to find out if that figure is accurate in 1991.

EMU and the Historical Society plan to form a network of owners who can benefit from sharing information and resources.

Western and Jones announced the survey as part of EMU's plan to renovate and create a museum of its own one-room Town Hall Schoolhouse, donated to the University in 1986 by the Geddes family.

The Town Hall Schoolhouse, which EMU relocated from its out-county location to central campus in 1989, has been restored on the exterior and awaits interior completion.

Already, Western said, the building symbolizes EMU's history as a teacher training institution, the first teachers' college west of the Allegheny Mountains.

One-room schoolhouse owners and/or those with information about one-room schoolhouses anywhere in Michigan are asked to write College of Education, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich. 48197.

For more information, contact Dr. Mary Green at (313) 487-3134.

EXPRESSIONS

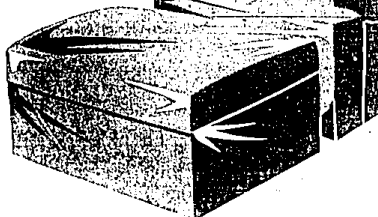
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