

Proposed law would let fines replace court dates

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Local governments could streamline their ordinance enforcement by turning "criminal misdemeanors" into "civil infractions."

Two Oakland County lawmakers strongly supported a package of bills designed to let violators pay tickets at a violations bureau rather than make them appear in district court.

"All local units can benefit," said Rep. Willis Bulard, R-Milford, a former township supervisor. "This (package) goes along with making most minor traffic violations civil infractions as we did a number of

years ago."

"It inflamed them (ordinance violators) when they found it was a criminal offense," said Rep. Penny Crisman, R-Rochester.

"We're having trouble with our district court dockets. It sort of jams their schedules when they have to deal with people shoveling walks and posting signs. They (judges) don't want to take these up," she added.

Bulard and Crisman last week joined other members of the House Local Government Committee in reporting out 16 bills allowing — but not requiring — cities, townships, villages and counties to

change local ordinances to civil infractions.

Such ordinances cover zoning violations, fences, signs, failure to obtain permits, dog control, burning, junk vehicles, weeds, snow removal, noise and even bicycle riding on sidewalks.

"This legislation would allow local units to take the onus of criminality from the violation of ordinances like these," said the sponsor, Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint. "It's not right to deem a citizen a "criminal" for having a loose pet, or for not shoveling their sidewalks, or for riding their bicycles on the sidewalk."

"Cities can have a civil infractions bureau, like a

parking ticket bureau," said David Osborn of the Michigan Municipal League, an association of cities and villages supporting the bills.

Leasing city attorney Kevin McKinley said cities could save hundreds of hours of attorney time by not having to take rental housing inspection cases to court.

If ticketed by a city inspector, a person could:

- Pay the fine at the violations bureau in person or by mail.
- Admit responsibility in person or by mail and wait for a court decision.

Sailing classes offered

The American Sailing Institute is offering sailing classes beginning May 5 at Kent Lake and Stony Creek Metroparks.

New sailors will be taught the fundamentals of sailing in classrooms and on the water in 18-foot boats. There will be six classes and the price is \$200.

To register, call 624-4030.

Audience sought

WKBD-TV in Southfield is looking for interested people to be part of a television studio audience for a discussion on child abuse. The show is "Straight Talk," hosted by Amyre Makupson, 10 o'clock news anchorwoman.

Taping will be at 5 p.m. Friday at the Southfield studios, 26905 W. 11 Mile Road. The show will air at 7 a.m. Saturday.

For reservations, call James Giroux at 355-7089 at any time.

OCC has science day for kids

Registrations are now being accepted for the third-annual "Science Day For Kids" at Oakland Community College's Highland Lakes campus Saturday, May 16.

Fee is \$7 per person. Registration is required by May 6. Call 360-3186 or 360-3041.

The event begins at 9 a.m. with a "Magic Science" demonstration by Dr. Zap. Workshops continue throughout the day until 4 p.m. Lunch will be sold.

The Highland Lakes campus occupies a portion of the Earth's surface at 7350 Cooley Lake Road in Waterford.

OU offers medical exam preparation

The Oakland University Division of Continuing Education will offer test preparation for the MCAT (Medical College Aptitude Test) in Saturday/Tuesday sessions, May 1 through 26 on the Rochester campus.

The MCAT preparation workshops will be conducted from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays, and 9-10 p.m. Tuesdays. The next MCAT exam is Sept. 18. Tuition is \$350.

Optional MCAT workshops include: power reading, 1:30-4:30 p.m., May 22, \$40; writing, 9 a.m. to noon, June 12, \$40.

For a brochure and to register, call (313) 370-3120, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

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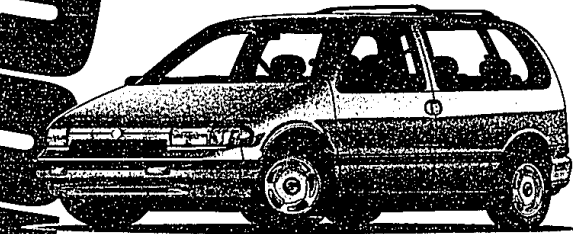
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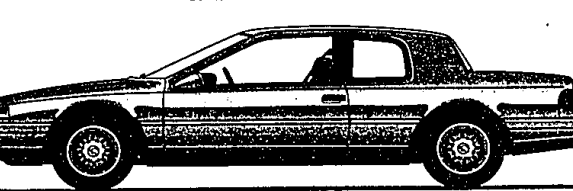
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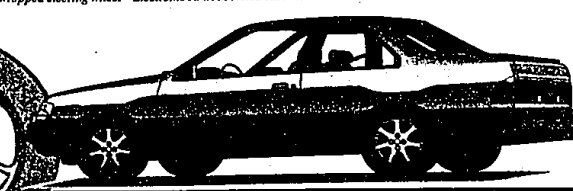
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