

They discovered heroes who lie within

Oakland County has a lot going for it.

We are the third wealthiest county in the country.

Two hundred Fortune 500 companies do business here.

Retail sales are greater than those of 15 entire states.

Eleven institutions of higher learning are located within our borders.

We boast more than half the robots for the nation.

And, more importantly, we have heroes.

Heroes like Patrick O'Meara of Bloomfield Hills.

O'Meara and his wife, Judy, were driving home June 9 on Long Lake Road near Pembroke, just west of Vaughn in Bloomfield Hills, Eccentric staff writer Greg Kowalski reported in a recent Birmingham-Bloomfield Eccentric.

In his rearview mirror, O'Meara saw a car approaching quickly from behind. It passed one car. Then it tried to dodge around another, but a car was coming in the opposite direc-

tion.

When the first car tried to swerve back it spun out of control, hit a tree and burst into flames.

O'Meara pulled over and ran to the car where he saw a girl inside who he first thought was dead. He tried to open the door, but it was locked. So he used his hand to smash the driver's side window, breaking the glass and, as it turned out, his wrist.

The girl, apparently dazed, recovered enough to scramble out the window.

The 15-year-old from West Bloomfield was ticketed for being too young to drive.

But thanks to O'Meara she walked away from the totaled car with only a bruised knee and, we hope, a lesson learned.

Heroes like Scott Zimmerman, co-owner of a Little Caesar's in Rochester Hills.

Zimmerman was among several customers and neighboring businesses who failed the escape of a man who robbed a Comerica Bank in Rochester Hills of more than \$12,000 just before



SCOTT ZIMMERMAN

on June 28, according to a story by Rochester Eccentric staff writer Sally Tato.

Hearing shouts of, "He just robbed the bank," Zimmerman left his store and joined another man who was trying to stop the robber.

When the two men blocked him, the suspect pulled out a stun gun and fired, temporarily staggering his original pursuer.

Zimmerman kept after him, and when the suspect tried to commandeer a car and push the driver aside, Zimmerman grabbed the man's arm. Meantime, the man who was

stunned moments earlier throw off the effects and began hitting the alleged robber with a wooden plank.

Zimmerman and his fellow hero were able to hold the man down until police arrived.

Heroes like Peter Eschaki, who grew up in West Bloomfield.

Peter, 29, recently gave his older brother Paul, 30, a kidney and the chance to again lead a normal life, wrote West Bloomfield-Lakes Eccentric reporter Tim Smith.

Doctors had predicted when Paul was a small boy that a kidney condition, at first controllable through medication, would eventually worsen, according to Fred Eschaki, the boys' father.

In January Paul was hospitalized with his kidneys functioning at only 5 percent. A one-to-five year wait was projected if he went on the kidney donor list. A dialysis machine accompanied him home.

To reach the kidney he would donate, Peter went through a painful operation in which doctors lifted his rib cage, leaving a 12-inch scar. He is

now back to work in Los Angeles.

Paul has been in the hospital since he received the kidney June 7 in Kansas City. Although he had some post-operative difficulties, at last report he was progressing. His mom, Nancy, is with him.

Fred Eschaki considers Peter a hero. "I thought it'd be good for other families to know this. . . I thought if parents care for their children, take care of them, then the children (later) take care of each other."

Nineteenth century American author, George William Curtis, penned: "Heroes in history seem to us poetic because they are there. . . But if we should tell the simple truth of some of our neighbors, it would sound like poetry."

Judith Doner Berne, a West Bloomfield resident, is former managing editor of the Eccentric Newspapers. You can comment on this column at (313)953-2047, Ext. 1997, or by writing or faxing a letter to the editor of this newspaper.

System can create opportunity for voter fraud

The Jim Nicholson story reminded me of a public relations lady who once told me over lunch she had made major changes in her life: different hair style, new wardrobe, new friends — even a new signature.

Next time she voted, she used her new signature and, to her astonishment, was never questioned by the poll worker. Anybody could have signed her name and voted, she said.

It recalled the time I was checking out a congressional candidate, a "Junior," to see if he voted regularly. How you voted is a matter of public record. Lots of candidates are embarrassed when their voting records are revealed.

The candidate and his father lived in the same township and precinct. The clerk's record showed Junior had missed one election. Junior later told me he had, in fact, voted but the poll workers stamped his father's card,

even though Sr. and Jr. had markedly different signatures.

Nicholson was accused by Ronna Romney, his rival for the GOP U.S. Senate nomination, of failing to vote in the 1992 presidential election.

Nicholson said he did vote, but (1) Jim Jr.'s card was stamped. At the time, Junior had moved to Illinois to work and vote, but (2) the city clerk in Michigan never cancelled his registration.

Bringing this up not to take sides in a party primary but to illustrate how casually our voting records are kept. The city clerk in Michigan should have received notice from Illinois that Jim Jr. had registered there — if the system worked properly.

Secretary of State Candice Miller, our chief elections official, estimates 15 to 20 percent of voter registrations are deadwood — people who have moved, died or dropped out of society. Meanwhile, state Sen. Alma Wheeler



TIM RICHARD

Smith, D-Salem, is beating her drum to loosen the rules by proposing voting by mail.

By mail? Whoa! Miller says that when a new statewide computer system is fully functional and the deadwood is removed, she will consider running an election by mail.

It amazes me that Michigan doesn't have massive voter fraud right now. Certainly, other states are reporting plenty of fraud. Items:

• A June 1995 Reader's Digest

article, "Vote Fraud: A National Disgrace," reported that California, Pennsylvania and Texas allow either same-day registration or registration without verification of address.

• Same article: "At least twice after her husband's death in May 1993, a Baltimore woman asked her local elections board to strike his name from the voter rolls. On election day 1994, she voted for the Republican gubernatorial candidate. . . Several weeks later she learned that her husband, a Democrat, had voted as well. . . The Democratic candidate for governor won a come-from-behind victory by 5,000 votes with a surge from the Baltimore precincts."

"In Baltimore, the board of elections had 21,899 such names (of voters who had been inactive five years, hadn't responded to two mailings and should have been purged), but officials dropped only 12,795 names." One gets the impression the Balti-

more clerk deliberately didn't cancel the dead husband's registration.

• This tale from Rich Lowry, political reporter for National Review, June 17: Absentee ballots in Alabama account for 3-4 percent of the vote. But in 1994 in Greene County, 34 percent of all ballots were absentees. The embattled chair of the Greene County Commission won reelection with 50 percent of his votes cast absentee. A watchdog group claimed absentee ballots were stolen from people's mailboxes, among other sins.

In 1976 Michigan adopted a "motor voter" law allowing the secretary of state to accept voter registrations at driver's license offices.

With so many flaws already in the system, Michigan should be very wary of mail voting and other moon "get out the vote" schemes.

Tim Richard reports on the local implications of state and regional events.



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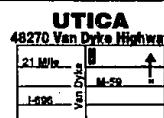
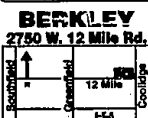
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