

Patterson is 'glad to be back to work'

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF REPORTER

He's five pounds lighter and still a little sore.

But L. Brooks Patterson has resumed his duties as Oakland County executive on a nearly full-time basis after undergoing angioplasty Dec. 1, to relieve breathing difficulties.

"I'm glad to be back to work," Patterson told members of the Business Roundtable Wednesday at the Michigan State University Conference Center in Troy. "I was always in contact with the office, but now I'm back almost full time."

Patterson rested at home after the attack that his physician said could have caused serious problems had the executive delayed medical attention. The time, he said, gave him time to think... about his health as well as the future of Oakland County.

"Basically, I'm on a diet for life," Patterson said, after joking about eating a jelly doughnut, but selecting a brand muffin instead. He washed it down with orange juice.

"I'm down to about 220," he said. "But I've got to lose a lot more. I can eat red meat once in a while, but no more fried chicken and no more French fries."

Patterson said he had a stress test about two weeks prior to experiencing chest pains and difficulty breathing. "I passed with flying colors," he said, "and I thought I was in pretty good shape. But apparently I was wrong."

The executive said he is scheduled to return to his doctor next week at which time he expects to be put on a strict diet with a light exercise regimen.

The executive has no other public meetings scheduled this



L. Brooks Patterson
Oakland County executive

week. But he was a "maybe" for today's meeting of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, the final session for 1997.

The roundtable meeting was Patterson's first public appearance since being hospitalized. The roundtable, convened on a temporary basis in 1993, is a group of businessmen who meet in committee to advise county government on business issues.

The executive said it's so successful, he wants to make the roundtable permanent. "We implemented about 48 or nearly 160 recommendations from the roundtable," he said.

"This is an important process," he said during an organizational meeting prior to the regular roundtable gathering. "We're planning for the 21st," he said, "particularly the year 2038, when Oakland is projected to surpass Wayne as the most populous county in Michigan."

Reaction to the executive — and the roundtable — were favorable.

Alan M. Kiriluk of Kirco Development Corp. in Troy has been a member of the roundtable from its inception. "It takes some research and some effort," he said. "But I like the results. Our recommendations didn't just go into a study that sits on a shelf somewhere."

"I heard so much about Mr. Patterson and the roundtable, I asked to be included," he said.

John Anderson, president of Solutions at Work in Southfield, said he wanted to be part of the roundtable after hearing good things about it.

Volunteers needed to adopt a family

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF REPORTER

Sometime tomorrow, or perhaps over the weekend, the Steve Ogg family hopes to have its Christmas shopping finished. In that respect, Steve, wife Julie and their kids — Kelly, 16, Joey, 14, and Katie, 11 — are like thousands of other Oakland County families enjoying the holidays.

"We will probably have spent a couple hundred dollars," said Ogg, the former women's softball coach at the Auburn Hills Campus of Oakland Community College. "I know the kids are spending some of their allowances."

Unlike the other families, however, the Ogg family has never met the four people who will receive those gifts. The Oggs know their names, ages and some other tidbits. But they've never met... and they don't expect to.

That's part of the fun.

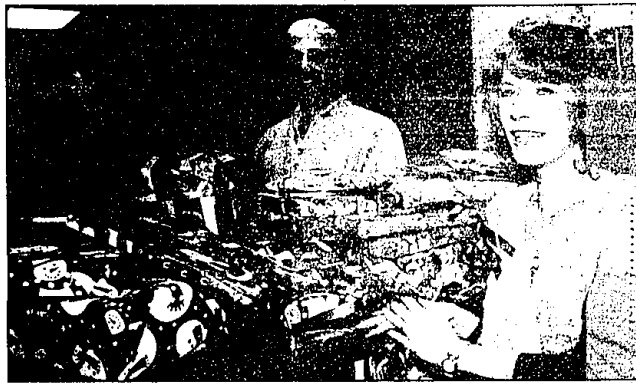
The Oggs are among an estimated 225 families participating in Oakland County's "Adopt-a-Family" program, sponsored by the Community Development Task Force of the Healthy People, Healthy Oakland.

The Oggs signed up about two weeks ago with the understanding — and requirement — they buy and wrap gifts and other items from the family's "needs list."

The Oggs' family lives in Pontiac and consists of a single mother and three youngsters.

But where they live and the make up of the family doesn't really matter, according to Steve Ogg. "They (the family) could be from anywhere in Oakland County," he said. "And it can be a single dad with foster kids."

What does matter, he continued, is that the adopted family — screened by the Oakland County Family Services — is in need. The Oggs know, for example,



STAFF PHOTO BY DONNA McLAUGHLIN

For 'adopted' families: These gifts are slated for delivery to families under the Adopt-a-Family program in Oakland County. The families of Steve Ogg (left) Joel Allen and Kim Hudson, all from the Auburn Hills Campus of Oakland Community College, are participating in the program that calls provides help for needy families.

he needs a coat for school.

The Ogg family has already "invested about four hours" shopping for its adopted family. "It's kind of fun," said Steve, "we buy things from the list — crayons, toys and things — and it's been a family project this year."

It's more than a matter of donating to a needy family, Ogg said. "We feel involved with another family," he said. "We can understand their needs, even if we can't meet all of them."

The 7-year-old in their adopted family wanted an expensive video game — something even the Oggs — with two family incomes and part of the kids' allowances — wasn't equipped to

buy.

The Oggs won't give the gifts directly to their adopted family — which is fine with them. "We don't want them embarrassed," he said, "and we don't want to be embarrassed."

By Monday, the Oggs will present their gifts to the adopted family's case worker, who will relay them to the ultimate destination.

Ogg and his family so enjoy shopping for their adopted family, that he has become something of a personal spokesperson for Adopt-a-Family.

His family experience has triggered three other "adoptions."

His mother, five brothers and

sister (who have families of their own) adopted one family.

Ogg's colleagues at OCC — including janitors and instructors in the criminal justice program — adopted another.

And the women's softball team adopted yet another.

"It's not a hard sell," explained Ogg, who — after stints as softball coach, and athletic director — is now the facilities manager at the Auburn campus of OCC. "I just talk about the program, and people want to be part of it."

Even so, Oakland Family Services needs about 60 more families willing to adopt needy strangers. The contact is Sherry Kaplan at (248) 473-1250.

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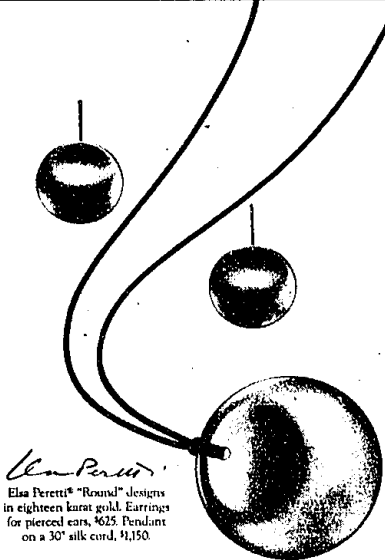
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