

**OAKLAND DIGEST**

Oakland Digest provides a summary of headline stories from around the county during the week leading up to May 14.

**BIRMINGHAM**  
Walkin' the dog: Holding a parade with enough basset hounds to merit entry in the Guinness Book of Records is the concept behind the "basset waddle," part of the Celebrate Birmingham parade set for 1 p.m. today. Basset hounds from all over the world will be present in downtown Birmingham as the Chamber of Commerce-sponsored event aims to set a record.

**CLARKSTON**  
Crash survivor: The pilot of the single engine airplane that crashed near Pine Knob Music Theater was listed in stable condition at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital. Ronald Ginani, 60, an Indiana resident, was alone in the rented Cessna 150 single engine plane when it crashed Tuesday morning.

**FARMINGTON HILLS**  
Suspect sought: A 32-year-old Farmington Hills resident, found stabbed to death inside his Grand River apartment building, likely knew his killer, Farmington Hills Police said. Police continue their investigation into the death of Michael Ellis, a Wayne County Probate Court employee whose body was found Monday at the Independence Green Apartments.

**LAKE ORION**  
Survey says: A majority of Orion Township residents support building a Meijer store on M-24 and Silver bell Roads as well as expanding the Eagle Valley Landfill according to a community survey conducted by a Walsh College student. But township officials debate the survey's accuracy. "Some of us had concerns about the wording of the questions," township clerk Jill Bastian said.

**OXFORD**  
Focus on religion: Faith comes ahead of doctrine, according to

Oxford High School members of FOCUS - the Fellowship of Christians United in Schools. The group, which prays weekly after school, isn't an official school club, but is looking for new members among classmates.

**ROCHESTER HILLS**  
Bank on it: North Oakland Community Bank, a new, locally-oriented lending institution, has been formed with a director's list that reads like a Who's Who of local business and government. Proposed directors include auto dealer, Russ Shelton, builder Frank Rowland and former Troy city manager Frank Cerstenecker, among others. Applications for the bank, and the companion Lakeside Community Bank in Sterling Heights, have been filed with the Financial Institutions Bureau.

**SOUTHFIELD**  
Open house: Southfield is celebrating its 40th anniversary as a city with an open house, 2-5 p.m. today at the municipal building, 26000 Evergreen. Past and present residents are invited to stop by for cake and entertainment.

**TROY**  
Bias suit: An unmarried Troy Police officer has filed suit against the city claiming he was bypassed for promotions on the basis of his marital status. In his suit, officer Charles Russ alleges a superior told him he would never be recommended for promotion as long as he remained single.

**WEST BLOOMFIELD**  
Adjusting to America: A group of metro Chaldean American teachers has formed a support group for parents of Chaldean American students in local schools. Chaldeans are Christians who have immigrated to the U.S. from Iraq. "We have to educate parents about the difference between (American and Iraqi schools) and how they can tap into it," West Bloomfield Schools community liaison Sharkey Haddad said.

# GOP, Dems split on affirmative action, comparable worth bills

By TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

Senate members split along party lines on a plan to eliminate affirmative action requirements from state contracts, while House members roughly did the same on a bill mandating "comparable worth" pay.

But while Senate Republicans passed their anti-affirmative action bill, and House Democrats passed the comparative worth bill, it's unlikely either will become law.

The Senate approved 21-16 Senate Bill 610 forbidding the state to require a bidder on a contract to "have an affirmative action plan in place." The bill goes on to say the state can't even consider whether an affirmative action plan even exists.

All yes votes were cast by Republicans, including Michigan's Sen. John Schuchman and Mat Dunsakias of Lake Orion. Voting no were 16 Democrats, including Gary Peters of Bloomfield Township and Republican John Schwarz of Battle Creek.

"Affirmative action is a concept that came into place to try to redress historical grievances against blacks in America," Sen. Virgil Smith, D-Detroit, said.

## Companion bill

The Senate also passed a companion measure, SB 615, to prohibit employers from "adjusting a test score, using a different cut-off score" or other forms of what is called "race norming" on tests given to employees and job applicants.

That bill was passed 23-14, with Schwarz rejoining the Republican fold and one Democrat voting with the GOP.

Peters protested the bill is unnecessary. It was that, Republicans - and business - turn to protest when House Democrats passed House Bill 4257, the "comparable worth" in pay requirement.

It passed 59-47, gaining support from three Republicans and including Patricia Godchaux of Birmingham. State AFL-CIO president

Frank Garrison cheered the bill, saying women are paid 74 cents for every \$1 men workers receive. The bill would make gender-based wage discrimination a violation of the state Civil Rights Act.

But many local House Republicans said the bill would hurt small businesses. "It is intended to make a political statement (and) creates a false hope," said six Republicans, including Andrew Ruckowski of Farmington Hills. "That should be a private matter between employees and employers via individual or collective bargaining."

Republicans Barbara Dobb of Union Lake, Penny Crisman of Rochester, Lynn Banks of Redford and Tom Middleton of Ortonville signed a protest that said the bill "would impose a significant new burden and liability on small businesses owned by women and minority business people."

## 'Too subjective'

Dobb said "comparable worth"

"The only thing this comparable worth bill guarantees is a lawsuit."

Barbara Dobb  
-R-Union Lake

is too subjective a concept to define in statute, adding, "The only thing this comparable worth bill guarantees is a lawsuit. As a small-business owner, I can't afford to have a judge take years and years to decide an issue."

"Wage rates, in a market economy, are determined by numerous market forces," said Rep. Greg Kaza, R-Rochester Hills.

The Small Business Association of Michigan called the bill "another unwarranted government intrusion into the private marketplace." SBAM said the result would be that "employers will surely be forced to reduce the number of those jobs they can afford to fill."

## OCC open house is scheduled

Oakland Community College is holding an open house 4-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 20 at its Auburn Hills campus for high school students and their parents.

The event allows prospective students to sample 20 minute lectures in a variety of classes.

The campus is at 2900 Featherstone, near the Pontiac Silverdome.

For more information, call (248) 340-6902.

Retail details? find out when, where and how in Malls & Mainstreets. C8

## Dollar lease used for vets' memorial

Orion Township and Orion War Memorial, Inc., are stretching \$1 a long way.

Last week the township board of trustees reviewed and approved an agreement that leases property at M-24 and Odanah for \$1 to Orion War Memorial, Inc., a nonprofit group which plans to build a monument to veterans at the site.

The agreement is for 30 years, and sets the stage for a formal Memorial Day ceremony later this month.

Lake Orion dentist Dr. Joseph Mastromatteo, who is among the leaders in the memorial building effort, said later that plans are rolling ahead nicely, and groundbreaking is being eyed for summer.

Under terms of the licensing agreement, design plans for the

memorial will be submitted to the township prior to the onset of any work on the property.

Construction plans are subject to approval from the building department, and final site plans will be reviewed and OK'd by the township planning commission and then forwarded to the board of trustees for approval.

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Meet the Author

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BY VINCE FLYNN

Published by Pocket Books



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