

OAKLAND DIGEST

Oakland Digest provides a summary of headline stories from around the county during the week leading up to July 23.

BIRMINGHAM
Leaving here: The director of Birmingham's Principal Shopping District is leaving after the Aug. 16 Woodward Dream Cruise to accept a similar post in Dearborn. Gail Gotsch-Fisher has directed the PSD, an organization representing downtown business owners, since its founding four years ago.

CLARKSTON
Cable complaints: Despite previous complaints, only a handful of Clarkston-area residents turned out for a recent public hearing on cable service. The hearing was designed to determine whether the community should renew its contract with TCI Cable.

FARMINGTON HILLS
Manager needed: Farmington Hills seeks a new city manager following the resignation of Dan Hobbs. Hobbs, who served two years, is leaving Michigan to become city manager of West Covina, Calif., a city 26 miles outside of Los Angeles.

LAKE ORION
Inn and out: The Lakeshore Motel, one of the last vestiges of Lake Orion's days as a summer

resort town, could be coming down to make way for a new, smaller inn closer to the water. Plans for the 1 1/2-acre Lapeer Road site would require approval from the village planning commission.

OXFORD
Standing by their man: Oxford Police officers lined up at last week's emergency safety authority meeting to say good things about Police Chief Gary Ford. Ford has been under attack by a group calling itself "Citizens for Awareness" which is circulating fliers alleging Ford is trying to hide terms of a retirement settlement with Harper Woods, his former employer, from the public.

ROCHESTER
Settlement?: Former Oakland County Sheriff's Sgt. Gerard Carlin, announced he has reached a tentative settlement in his civil rights lawsuit against the county, but county officials said the parties had only discussed settlement terms. Carlin charged the county prosecutor's office violated his civil rights by naming him in a 1992 corruption probe brought against the department's Rochester Hills substation. District and circuit court judges subsequently dismissed 33 charges against Carlin, though the case has been appealed to the Michigan

Supreme Court. Carlin said the settlement will give him back pay, pension money and attorney fees, but county attorney John Lynch said no such settlement had been reached. Carlin is currently a candidate in the Republican primary for the 46th District State House seat.

SOUTHFIELD
New library: City officials are once again considering building a new library as part of the City Centre development, west of the current site. Voters rejected a 1995 library proposal, but complaints linger about a lack of space and lack of parking at the current Civic Center library site.

TROY
Rain delay: Stormy weather dampened the crowd, but not spirits, at the annual Troy Family Festival on Wednesday at Boulan Park. Some 1,600 people turned out for this year's rain-drenched event, about half that for previous festivals.

WEST BLOOMFIELD
Time to disband?: Two members of the West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Board are drafting a Nov. 3 ballot proposal that would ask voters to eliminate the independently-elected, though strite-torn, public body and hand its duties over to the township board.

OCC official says he will go on hunger strike to protest contract stalemate

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

A key official at Oakland Community College has started a hunger strike to protest lack of progress in OCC's bargaining with his union, Teamsters Local 214.

"I wasn't a Teamster when I came here two years ago. I was made a Teamster," Patrick Kopytek, director of physical facilities, told the board at the end of its July 20 meeting.

He faulted the college for not living up to its ideals of "shared responsibility" and "open communications" and left the room as soon as the meeting ended. While both sides have made little comment about bargaining issues, it's known that employee contributions to health insurance are a major stumbling block.

Kopytek supervises the letting of contracts and work on OCC's five campuses. His area gets much of the \$35 million per year in new property tax revenue approved in 1995 by voters. He is a professional engineer with degrees in mechanical engineering and industrial management. Board members have expressed high confidence in his work.

Board members seemed surprised at Kopytek's remark but said nothing during the meeting. Afterwards, newly elected board chair Carol Crow of Waterford said, "That's his decision. I'm not going to be responsible for the consequences of his decision."

"He's serious," said George Mergner, director of campus services at Orchard Ridge and spokesman for the Teamsters unit.

The Teamsters represent about 113 administrative and managerial employees, including

deans, professionals, enrollment and recruiting personnel. The union won a representation election early in 1996.

For months, the union has criticized the OCC administration for slowness on reaching a new contract, complaining there has been no pay raise since July of 1995.

The unit recertified the Teamsters in a June 30 election, 72-25, with 101 members voting.

The hunger strike is a sometimes effective, sometimes not, method of sending authorities a message. In the 1980s, Irish prisoners starved themselves to death without persuading Great Britain to change its policies toward unifying Ireland.

Mergner said the Teamsters members are frustrated at "low morale, time wasted and efficiency clouded by this 2 1/2 year undertaking to reach an agreement. Certainly we as an institution would be much better off with a collective approach to problem solving and with a more positive image."

Chancellor Richard Thompson said the parties on Aug. 24 would meet to set up conditions for fact-finding.

Board elects

The OCC board elected Crow to chair the board, Jeanne Towar of Royal Oak to be vice chair and Pamela Davis of Clawson as secretary, all on the motions of Sandra Ritter of Waterford. Terms are two years.

The votes were 4-2 with Anne Scott of Royal Oak and Janice Simmons of Rochester Hills dissenting without explanation. Davis arrived after the vote. Simmons was ousted as chair in 1995 when the board majority

fired Patsy Calkins as chancellor. Scott has consistently voted with her.

Towar wondered aloud whether the board even needed to elect officers, citing the University of Michigan where the board of regents operates without officers.

"We're governed by the Michigan Community College Act," replied Scott, who accepted the appointment as parliamentarian.

Crow succeeds Judith Wiser of West Bloomfield.

Lobbyist retained

In other business, the OCC board:

■ Gave a raise to its Lansing lobbying firm, Karoub Associates, to \$2,500 a month from \$2,000, and extended its contract a year.

■ Karoub was absolutely critical in getting us \$1.5 million for the F Building (at Orchard Ridge), said Thompson. "Its new rate is still \$500 below the next lowest bid we got three years ago," Scott agreed, noting that with term limits turning over 65 of the 110 House seats "it's absolutely imperative" to have a good lobbyist on the scene.

■ Approved a resolution allowing college employees to buy additional retirement credits from the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System. There would be no cost to the college.

■ Learned that the firm of Mueller & Carngio Inc. was successful bidder for a contract to remove trash from an old dump site on the Highland Lakes Campus. The trash was found during excavation for a new Grounds and Maintenance Building.

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