

# OU prof's home runs on the sun

By ED BAS

Associate Professor Robert Edgerton of Oakland University doesn't just teach a few classes in environmental engineering and leave it at that. He practices it at home the built and designed his own solar-powered hot water heater and took his message to the Michigan Energy Conservation conference in Lansing.

Edgerton is a member of the Michigan Energy Conservation Group (MECG) which, along with the Energy Administration arm of the Michigan Department of Commerce, sponsored the conference. A summary of their findings is now being prepared by Edgerton for delivery to Gov. William Milliken as a guide to the state's future energy use plan to be presented by the governor to the state legislature in March.

More than 250 attended the conference as representatives of manufacturing, public utilities, state government, teaching and farming. A group of lumbermen from the Upper Peninsula attended, along with State Senate Majority Leader William Fitzgerald and James Harding, advisor to the California Energy Commission.

THE CONFERENCE held workshops broken down by region, including Oakland County, Detroit, western Michigan, central Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. One accomplishment was a proposed addition to the state building code that would require more heat-saving insulation in state buildings which supporters also hope will find its way into local ordinances.

The conference opposed development of plants to convert garbage into fuel and energy, citing air pollution this process might cause. "We'd much rather see a resource recovery act where material is reclaimed to be used over again rather than burying it," Edgerton said. "Incinerating our garbage should be a last resort."

Edgerton the conservationist sees big industry as doing the best job of conserving energy while Edgerton the

professor sees a trend by students to turn away from the problems of the environment.

"They're all too worried about getting jobs right now. But whereas the larger corporations have seen the handwriting on the wall and are doing their best to conserve energy, it's the small and medium-sized industries that don't have the money for research. One approach is for large industries to lend help and know-how to those that can't afford it."

Edgerton doesn't see solar, wind or nuclear energy sources as the answer to energy depletion but only as means to help cut the use of conventional sources. He also sees natural gas as an energy source on its way out due to lack of supply.

AS FOR Oakland County where he lives and teaches, Edgerton said he would like to see some sort of air pollution authority established as in Wayne County.

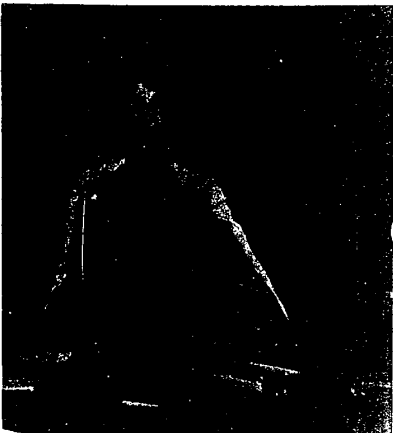
"Oakland County has something like 1,200 lakes, many of them weedfilled by sewage and fertilizer runoff.

One of the reasons Oakland County in particular has this problem with its lakes, according to Edgerton, is because of its many old septic tanks that leak sewage into the water table and then into the lakes. One possible solution he would like to see implemented is land disposal of wastes as proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and now being used in Muskegon. That waste is actually used to grow corn and alfalfa.

If the students aren't as concerned with energy savings as he would like them to be, Edgerton thinks his university is doing a commendable job.

"They saved \$100,000 last year and next year is going to a computer-controlled heating system which should also save a lot."

If the campus radicals are absent and Edgerton looks too much like a professor to fill the part, his feelings on protection of the environment and the conservation of our limited energy sources comes through loud and clear.



## Appears in auto show

Model Patty Davis of Southfield has been selected to appear in the Detroit Auto Show at Cobo Hall, Jan. 15-23. Shown with a scale model of the Dodge exhibit, the Dominican High School and University of Detroit Dental School graduate will be among the small army of young women greeting show visitors.

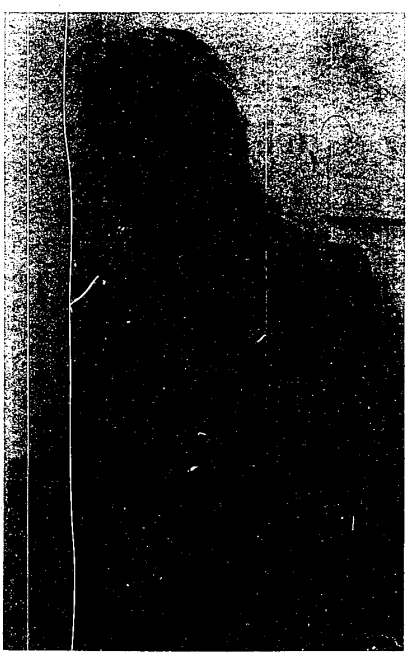
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"We'd much rather see a resource recovery act where material is reclaimed to be used over again rather than burying it," says OU Associate Professor Robert Edgerton. (Staff photo by Ed Bas).

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