

# 'Reach out'

## Mixup lets inmates dial direct

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Reaching out to touch someone was easier for prisoners at the Oakland County Jail recently, thanks to a mixup when the facility switched long distance carriers.

The mixup was quickly corrected, "but someone's likely to have a hellish telephone bill," according to Undersheriff Billy J. Nolin.

Inmates — who normally can call only if someone accepts charges — were able to call anywhere in the world for about 48 hours providing they knew a working credit card number, according to a spokesman for Michigan Bell Telephone Co.

"But we won't know how many calls were made or how much it will cost until we've completed a billing cycle," said Phillip A. Jones, media relations manager for the company.

WHILE THAT may be some time, jail officials speculated the bill could

be substantial. "Everyone knew about it (calling with a credit card)," said Lt. Henry C. Wallace, commander of the jail that can hold more than 1,200 people. "And they made a lot of calls."

The mixup occurred about April 10, Jones said, as the jail was switching from ITT to another long distance carrier. As workmen were changing over, the normal control mechanism was apparently circumvented and inmates were free to call whom ever, wherever, he said, providing they knew a working credit card number.

Jail officials learned something was wrong when one of the inmates called one of his jailers and told him what he thought of him, Wallace said. Normally an inmate could not make such a call without going through the operator and without the receiver agreeing to pay for the call.

WALLACE SAID it wasn't likely that every inmate knew a working

credit card number. But conceivably someone who knew one could have given the number to others, he said.

But a number got around and calls — lots of them — were made, Wallace said.

As officials sort out who called where — and who pays — there's likely to be some less than friendly discussions, Nolin predicted.

One thing is certain, however, he said, "the county isn't paying for them."

## Faxon talks to Dem group

State Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, will speak to the Oakland County Young Democratic Club at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Bloomfield Township Public Library, Lone Pine and Telegraph.

The club's general business meeting will follow. The young Democrats meet the second Thursday of each month.

For more details, call 661-2576.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

## Carving for grades

Chef apprentice students from Oakland Community College spent Tuesday testing and preparing a meal for their families and employers at OCC's Orchard Ridge in Farmington Hills. Dana Marshall, left, of Rochester prepares a lake trout under the watchful eye of Mario Etemd, head chef at St. Joseph

Mercy Hospital in Pontiac. Marshall, currently employed at Machus Red Fox restaurant in Bloomfield Township, was one of 17 graduates this year, the largest class in the eight-year-old program that produces certified cooks.

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## MEA re-elects Chunovich

Larry Chunovich, a Southfield mathematics teacher, and Mary Christian, a Flint elementary teach-

er, will serve their fourth consecutive two-year terms as president and vice president of the Michigan Edu-

cation Association. The union is the state's largest organization of education employees.

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