

# Reveille probable for Oakland boot camp

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Proposals to resume the Oakland County boot camp and to reorganize the sheriff's department are likely to be approved today by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

They have already triggered a testy exchange between Sheriff John F. Nichols, a Republican, and county commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick, a Democrat.

The brief exchange took place last week, as the board's finance committee OK'd the two measures and referred them to today's meeting.

Nichols told the finance committee that both measures — the boot camp and a department reorganization — can be done at minimal cost.

The boot camp — initiated on a trial basis for six weeks last fall — can accommodate about 100 inmates, from April 1 through Dec. 31, for about \$90,000, Nichols said, including the cost of three new positions.

The reorganization involves the transfer of 21 positions and upgrading one lieutenant's position to cap-

## Growth of Sheriff/County Budgets

In millions

	'82	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91
Sheriff's Budget	\$16.3	\$17.4	\$18.6	\$17	\$23.3	\$27.1	\$19.8	\$16.1	\$10.5	\$10.5
County Budget	\$119	\$114	\$120	\$137	\$149	\$163	\$168	\$204	\$215	\$234
Percentage	14.8	15.2	14.4	15.1	15.6	16.7	16.7	16.7	15.1	15.1

Source: Oakland County Board of Commissioners

As with the general cost of government, the sheriff's budget has increased steadily — in actual dollar amounts as well as a percentage of the total county budget — over the last decade. While many factors are responsible, the biggest yearly increase was from 1988 to 1989, when the annual increase was more than \$7 million. Most of that increase was attributable to the opening of a new jail facility with 130 new positions.

Nichols explained. The added expense, \$1,824 annually, can be financed from the contingency fund in the existing budget.

THE TESTY EXCHANGE

occurred when Pernick, who has been grappling with county budgets since 1989, wanted some details. He wanted to know, for example, whether boot patrols — a high priority for Pernick — would be reduced be-

cause of the reorganization.

The sheriff's budget is the largest single category within the county budget, said Pernick, D-Southfield. Will a reorganization now necessitate budget increases next year? Or the year after?

No, road patrols would not be cut back, Nichols said. Patrols provide police visibility and usually deter crime — also a high priority with the sheriff.

Furthermore, he did not expect the reorganization to prompt higher costs in the near future, Nichols said. At times, Nichols responses were curt and to the point. At other times, they were casual, almost penial.

But they weren't satisfactory as far as Pernick was concerned. I ask you simple questions and you give me satirical answers, he said.

Views were not raised during the exchange. It prompted little comment from other commissioners who subsequently approved both measures. R.1. Pernick cast the dissenting vote in both cases.

"I WAS NOT" satisfied with his answers," Pernick said later. "But the

only thing I can do besides raising questions is to vote 'no'."

Pernick said this was another case of his colleagues — particularly Republicans — talking tough on controlling costs, but failing to take action, or even asking hard questions when appropriate.

Not everyone saw the exchange in the same light, however. Commissioner John F. Pappageorge, R-Troy, for example thought Nichols gave complete and satisfactory responses to Pernick's questions.

"I think Nichols has done a fine job on both proposals," said Pappageorge. "And his answers to Pernick's questions were appropriate."

Commissioner G. William Caddell, committee chairman, said he found the exchange between Pernick and Nichols to be informative.

"Pernick's been around a long time and knows the budget," said Caddell, a Republican from Walled Lake. "I thought the questions were appropriate. But so were the responses."

## Sheriff to promote first black captain

Henry Wallace, who helped integrate the Oakland County Sheriff's Department in 1972, is about to become yet another barrier.

Wallace will become the department's first black captain if the Oakland County Board of Commissioners approve a reorganization today.

The promotion has nothing to do with the fact Wallace's black Sheriff John F. Nichols told commissioners last week. He's being promoted because he's a damn good officer.

Wallace, a resident of Pontiac, was born in America, Ga., and came to Oakland County in the 1940s to join his mother, who was already working in one of the automobile facilities.

He has an associate degree from Oakland Community College and

worked as a corrections officer for the Michigan Department of Mental Health for about 16 years prior to joining the sheriff's department.

He was hired as a jail guard and is currently commander of the Oakland County Jail and supervises about 250 employees responsible for 1,000 inmates.

Wallace has reached several department milestones during his career. He was among the first black officers promoted to sergeant and he was one of the few ever promoted to lieutenant.

Wallace said one of his proudest accomplishments occurred within the last two years. "I joined the New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church," he said.

He has one daughter, Samika, who is 16.

## This boot camp grad is no model

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Oakland County's pilot boot camp has at least one tangible result. A discipline-conscious car thief.

Sheriff John F. Nichols talked about the pilfered car thief Thursday before the finance committee of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, when he asked for \$90,000 to resume the boot camp program in April.

Oakland's boot camp was initiated on a trial basis in September to give youthful, nonviolent offenders a chance of penalties — lengthy jail terms or six weeks of living in tents under the control of drill instructors.

Commissioners approved the program last year after Nichols argued

the boot camp offered something besides saving tax dollars. A taste of discipline that might put some inmates on the right path for good.

Although a few inmates dropped out, most of those who started the program finished. There was a graduation exercise before the program was discontinued because of cold weather.

The boot camp was probably successful, Nichols told commissioners Thursday. But the department can't be sure until it has a precise method of measuring success by tracking graduates to see which, if any, are repeat offenders.

SO FAR the department only knows about one of its graduates, Nichols said. And his is hardly a success story.

Deputies recently spotted a car reported stolen, the sheriff said. In customary fashion, they stalked it out hoping to catch the thief.

The young man who approached the stolen car and prepared to drive it away seemed to have an air about him, Nichols said. He walked erect and "squared his corners as he turned," presumably from the hours of marching boot camp inmates were required to do.

Officers eventually confirmed the suspect was indeed a boot camp grad, the sheriff said. But his speech might have said as much.

As he was arrested, the man said "yes, sir" and "no, sir," Nichols said with begrudging satisfaction.

The boot camp should be funded again, Nichols said. Perhaps better tracking methods would show different results.

At the very least, the boot camp is a much cheaper way of housing inmates, Nichols said.

Previous figures are not available, but the cost of keeping inmates in boot camp is about half of what it takes to house them in the main jail, he said.

That's about \$27 per day for each inmate in boot camp, compared with \$53 per day in the regular housing, according to jail records.

Commissioners agreed. The approved the "approved" which will be presented to the entire Board of Commissioners at Thursday's regular meeting.

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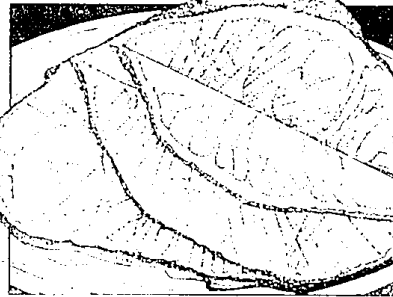
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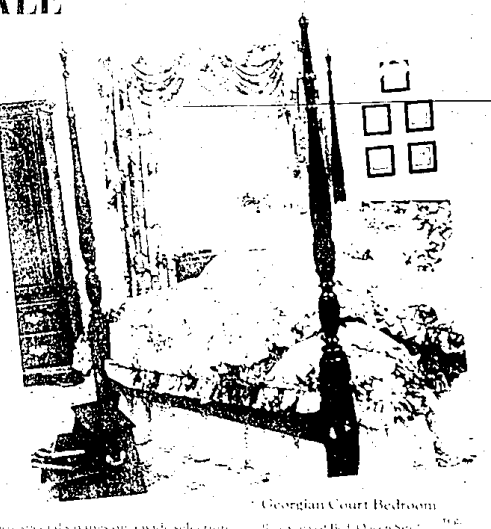
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