

County's new culture czar seeks to work some magic

As L. Brooks Patterson assembles his new staff, the Observer & Eccentric will spotlight appointees and the jobs they will be performing for county residents.

By PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

At a press conference to introduce some of his new appointees, L. Brooks Patterson turned to his new coordinator of cultural affairs and quipped, "Make this front row disappear, will you?"

The Oakland County Executive-elect was joking, of course. The front row was reserved for the media, the very people invited to generate stories about his new administration.

Patterson probably has some other magic in mind for the new culture czar anyway... like improving communications with some of the movers and shakers developing Detroit's downtown theater district.

Steve Weikal would appear to have excellent credentials for that kind of magic. The 1981 graduate of West Bloomfield High School works with Roy Shephardson, who helped remodel the Fox Theatre, and Weikal has worked on rejuvenating the State, Gem and Grand Circus theaters.

It was in the cards

"I'm a numbers guy who hap-

pens to work in the entertainment field," Weikal said this week when asked about his ties to Detroit's emerging theater district.

Weikal, the youngest of Patterson's appointments, graduated cum laude from Michigan State University with a degree in economics and has done graduate work at the University of Adelaide in South Australia. His transition from the world of finance into the realm of the theater was magic... literally.

He had been doing card tricks and making things disappear since, at the age of 10, he saw a magic show at Abbott Middle School. The hobby turned into a job — making financial problems disappear — when he developed his own magic show for hire at restaurants, parties and business gatherings.

It was while pursuing his magic hobby that young Weikal struck up a friendship with a girl named Cynthia. Her father happened to be Harry Blackstone Jr., the world renowned magician.

Weikal has worked as Blackstone's assistant many times since then, the most recent being last month in Baltimore.

A perfect fit

Equally important — in his transition from magic to the theater to Oakland County govern-

ment — Blackstone introduced Weikal to Roy Shephardson, who needed a numbers cruncher with a feel for show business.

Weikal had not only a finance/show business background, but also "the ability to do many things well," said Shephardson, who directed the restoration of the Fox Theatre.

"He's flexible and not at all bashful," Shephardson continued. "That's important."

Weikal said his forte is bringing resources together. To illustrate, he points to the role he plays in the annual Governor's Arts Awards program, the program to recognize and promote the arts in Michigan. Weikal worked on the arts recognition program once for Gov. James Blanchard and twice for Gov. John Engler.

Weikal said his life, so far, has been pretty free of political or governmental involvement, except for a brief internship with Sen. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield. Nor are his parents, David and Peg Weikal who still live in West Bloomfield, particularly involved in politics.

Magic networking

Weikal said he was introduced to Patterson the same way he met



DAN DEAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Theater gem: Steve Weikal, pictured in front of Detroit's Gem Theatre, is considered a numbers whiz with a flair for magic. He is the county's new cultural czar.

Shephardson... through the medium of magic. "I was doing (magic) a fund raiser for the Men of Mercy (Hospital) in Oakland County. I think I met him several other times, usually at magic shows."

Asked whether juring theater development from Detroit was a factor in appointing Weikal, Patterson said no... and yes.

"No, the goal is not to lure some of that (theater) develop-

ment from Detroit," said the executive-elect. "The reverse is true."

"We want to increase contact with downtown Detroit so there might be some joint ventures in the area of cultural affairs or entertainment. We want to reach across Eight Mile Road."

"With Steve's contacts and experience, some ventures may be opened up both ways."

Weikal said he intends to bring a "definite economic perspective

to the county's office of cultural affairs."

"I want to continue some of the things the county has already started," he said, "like expanding cultural opportunities in the schools. But I do have a financial background."

Weikal, who is single, will replace Virginia Rodgers as director of Oakland's cultural affairs. She has held that position for nine years.

Sparkle Your Home

For the Holidays Season



Creations
24033 Research Dr., Farmington Hills
(313) - 474-4433

Any room in your home can look larger, more elegant.
Custom mirror installed in your home for as low as \$5.00 per sq. ft.
Custom etched & carved door lights & side lights from \$125.00

Present this Ad and receive an additional 10% off. Don't delay - offer expires 12/23/92.

NINE REASONS WHY SIENA HEIGHTS COLLEGE IS THE BEST DEGREE-COMPLETION PROGRAM IN METRO-DETROIT

Every year, we survey our adult students on their level of satisfaction with Siena. They rate us significantly higher than comparable colleges in the following areas:

1. Attitude of faculty toward students
2. Scheduling of classes
3. Flexibility to design program of study
4. Racial harmony
5. Testing/Grading system
6. Accuracy of information before enrolling
7. Availability of advisor
8. Admission/Registration/Billing procedures
9. CONCERN FOR YOU AS A STUDENT

If you are a certified professional and/or have an associate's degree and need a BACHELOR'S DEGREE

CALL US TODAY FOR DETAILS
SIENA HEIGHTS COLLEGE
SOUTHFIELD CENTER
669-6490 OR 1-800-521-0000 X. 201



Franklin Terrace Apartments are family owned - and as 'founders of the industry' we know what you want in senior living!

- ◆ personal attention
- ◆ family atmosphere
- ◆ luxurious and affordable
 - ◆ elegant dining room
 - ◆ two meals daily
 - ◆ social activities
 - ◆ scheduled transportation
- ◆ studio or 1 bedroom apartments
- ◆ 24 hr. emergency monitoring
- ◆ housekeeping services twice weekly
- ◆ linen service
- ◆ all utilities included
- ◆ on-site Henry Ford Hospital Senior Out-reach Clinic

Call for a brochure!

FRANKLIN TERRACE APARTMENTS
Gracious Senior Living
26952 FRANKLIN ROAD
SOUTHFIELD
313/358-0212



IT WON CAR AND DRIVER'S SEDAN TEST BY INTEGRATING TWO BASIC COMPONENTS: THE CAR AND THE DRIVER.

THE BMW 325i SEDAN PRICED FROM \$27,990.

At the Bavarian Motor Works, we regard your relationship with your car as significantly more than emotional.

True, it is rather easy to become attached to a BMW. But it is equally easy to become integrated with it. In fact, every car we build is engineered with that goal in mind. Which, as Car and Driver recently confirmed, makes for an incomparable driving experience.

"AS SURE-FOOTED AS A SHERPA"

In a grueling comparison test that included ten of the industry's most noted \$30,000 sedans, none inspired praise quite like the BMW 325i. Partly because of its "elegant styling" and "German good looks." But mainly because

of the car's ability to remain firmly planted in situations where ordinary cars would be fortunate to remain planted at all.

As the editors articulated, "its steering is crisp and accurate" and its suspension "feels as sure-footed as a sherpa." Amounting to "a stunning example of what a great driver's car should be." A virtue that is as comforting as it is exhilarating, simply because it helps you feel like you're in control of the car, as opposed to the car being in control of you.

Which ultimately leads to a safer driving experience. Particularly when combined with a set of "precise and linear" antilock brakes. Or a strategically reinforced steel safety cage, electronically triggered driver's-side airbag, and safety belts that automatically tighten in the event of a collision.

AN ENGINE WITH AN IQ.

Turn the key of a BMW 325i and you'll awaken a mechanical wonder. A 2.5-liter, 6-cylinder engine that actually adjusts its own valves in order to maintain the highest possible level of performance. Resulting in a "symphony of expensive-sounding whirring and humming" that needs almost no maintenance beyond the routine changing of oil, filters and spark plugs.

And like practically every component on the BMW 325i, this engine is fully backed by a 4-year/50,000-mile, bumper-to-bumper warranty* and our nationwide Roadside Assistance program*.

So if you're considering a new sedan, we encourage you to heed the advice of the pundits at Car and Driver magazine and consider the BMW 325i.

The car whose "win is a tribute to its driving capabilities." And whose driving capabilities are a tribute to the belief that no component of an automobile is more important than the one behind the wheel.

For more information, call 800-334-4BMW.

THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE.

Ann Arbor
AUTO-STRASSE, LTD.
617 Detroit Street
(313) 663-3309

East Detroit
BAVARIAN MOTOR VILLAGE, LTD.
24717 Grand Avenue
(313) 772-8600

Bloomfield Hills
ERHARD BMW
4065 Maple Road
(313) 642-6565