

Arc advocacy group seeks mental health board seat

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

The Arc of Oakland County, an advocacy group for retarded people, is angry at the county board of commissioners for not appointing an Arc representative to the Community Mental Health Service Board.

With the county likely to take control of the distribution of all state mental health money in Oakland, the clamor regarding who serves on the mental health board has gotten a lot louder, said commissioner Marilyn Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills.

Currently the 12-member mental health board distributes about \$30 million a year to various organizations that help retarded people and adults and children with mental illnesses. The state controls the distribution of another \$50 million in Oakland County.

If the county takes over "full management" of the distribution, it would get to pass out the whole bundle, expected to be at least \$80 million.

"That balloons the responsibility of the mental health board substantially," said Gosling, who is also a member of that board.

With three vacancies on the board, the county commission's General Government Committee asked the county commission April 29 to approve the appointments of Southfield resident Cal-

■ 'They don't have to have somebody on that board to get their fair amount of money.'

**Commissioner Don Jensen
R-Birmingham**

vin Lippitt, Clawson resident Sherry Samson and Bloomfield Township resident Shelley Tubb, who is also a Republican commissioner.

The commission refused to accept the committee's recommendations because there was a question about whether Lippitt, the president of the Alliance for the Mentally III, has a conflict of interest.

None of the nominees, however, have ties to Arc. Apparently figuring the commission would approve the nominees at its April 29 meeting, Arc shot off an angry letter of protest to the commission and to the Observer & Eccentric.

"The Arc of Oakland County has always tried to work professionally with our Community Mental Health Service Board, yet we were denied an opportunity to directly represent those with developmental disabilities," wrote Tom Kendzioriski, executive director of Arc.

Kendzioriski said the name of Arc board member Judy Summers was thrown in the hat for consideration.

Gosling said she was "very impressed with (Summers') credentials," but didn't know she was affiliated with Arc.

Commissioner Don Jensen, R-Birmingham, who is chairman of the general government committee, said Arc members are "over-reacting" and that "they don't have to have somebody on that board to get their fair amount of money."

Jensen raised the specter of conflict of interest and said the commission probably won't put anyone on the mental health board who works for a group that gets money through the board.

Arc has received \$10,000 a year through the mental health board for the last four years, Kendzioriski said. That would disqualify Summers, Gosling said, as long as she stays on the Arc board of directors.

"There would be a perception that she was acting on (Arc's) behalf," Gosling said. Kendzioriski said Summers would likely quit her Arc board seat if appointed to the mental health board.

The general government committee meets Monday, and will probably come up with another list of nominees for the empty seats.

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Area bridge group hosts huge tourney

The Southern Michigan Bridge Association is sponsoring a massive bridge tournament May 18-23 at the Southfield Civic Center Pavilion.

The entry fee is \$15 for two sessions, which amounts to eight hours of card playing. There is no advance registration. A "partnership desk" will be available to find someone for you to play with.

Organizers of the Wolverine Regional Bridge Tournament are ex-

pecting at least 3,500 players to attend from all over the United States and parts of Canada.

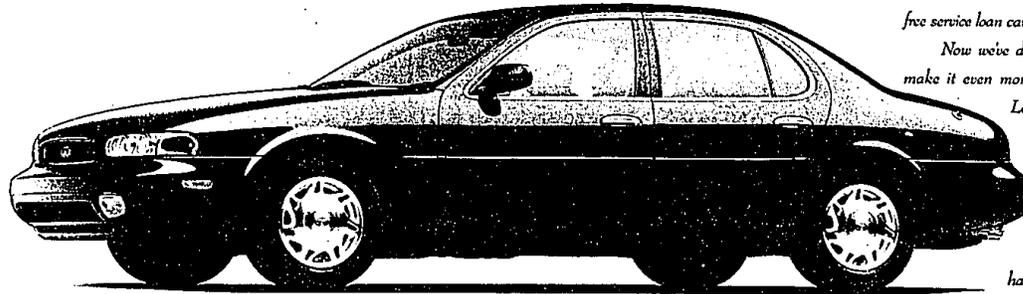
Attending bridge celebrities include Benito Garozzo who helped win 11 Bermuda Bowls and four world championships between 1965 and 1984 as a member of the Italian blue team.

The other bridge celebrity will be Zeke Jabbour, a past U.S. champion and winner of the Barry Crane 500 Award.

Card games begin at 1 p.m. Tuesday and end the following Sunday, May 23. Categories include stratified women, seniors and pairs. "Speedball Pairs," "Moon is Blue Zip KO Teams" and "Stratified Spring Season Swiss Teams."

Sandwiches and soup will be available on site, as will be free ice cream (11 p.m. Friday, May 21) and free pizza (11 p.m. Saturday, May 22).

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