

Patterson flexes muscles, vetoes 2 commission items

By **PAV MURPHY**
STAFF WRITER

The honeymoon seems to be over between L. Brooks Patterson and the Oakland County commissioners.

With less than five months in office, the new Oakland County executive last week ranked commissioners by vetoing two resolutions they had passed overwhelmingly.

While some commissioners see the vetoes as part of the normal give-and-take between elected officials, some insist they're akin to a declaration of war.

"I'm hurt," said commissioner Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloom-

field. "I've been a personal friend and political ally of Brooks for years. Many of us feel the same way."

"But this (the vetoes) isn't the kind of thing you get from an ally. It's the kind of thing you get from somebody who wants to fight."

While they don't want to fight, Law and others say they're ready.

At Thursday's regular board meeting, commissioners voted 19 to 2 to consider an override resolution at the May 27 meeting. An override requires a two-thirds vote of the board.

In considering that move, commissioners set the stage for the first battle — the first political

showdown — between the new executive and the county board.

Patterson, however, doesn't see the controversy in the same light. "This (the veto message) isn't a declaration of war," he said in a statement released by his office Friday. "This is an attempt to define the relationship between the county executive and the county board. It's a philosophical statement about the separation of powers."

At issue are two measures commissioners previously approved, almost routinely.

One bans incinerators from any future solid waste plan Oakland County may draft. The second re-

quires the county Building Authority to inform commissioners of major changes in building projects.

Those measures seemed relatively innocuous to most commissioners — as well as the staff personnel who helped prepare them.

Commissioner Shelby G. Taub, R-Bloomfield Hills, said Patterson was testing the board. "The executive is trying to see if we have the courage to defend our turf."

Taub and others say Patterson's veto, in effect, takes away powers and responsibilities commissioners feel duty bound to exercise. To take away that au-

thority, they insist, is to neuter the county board.

"If we allow this veto to stand," said commissioner Sue Ann Douglas, R-Rochester, commissioners will be relegated to be the proverbial rubber stamp.

Commissioner Kevin A. Miltner, whose fifth district includes part of West Bloomfield, agrees. "We can't let this (the vetoes) stand."

Commissioner Marilyn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills, said she is concerned about the veto, but not overly so. "I see the veto as part of the normal process," she said. "The new executive is trying to see what he can do, and

what the board can do."

Commissioner Donald Jensen, R-Birmingham, has yet another view. "I didn't vote for either of those measures. As far as I'm concerned, the veto is a good move."

Commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield, emphasized the issue is not partisan. "This is not Republican vs. Democrat. This is executive vs. commissioners."

Furthermore, said Pernick, the vetoes seem inappropriate. "A veto message ought to be reserved for an extremely important measure. By vetoing something this minor, he needlessly expended some political capital."

Meadow Brook plans restroom expansion

By **RALPH R. ECHTINAW**
STAFF WRITER

Denizens of the Meadow Brook Music Festival this summer should notice almost \$200,000 worth of improvements as they trudge into the facility on the grounds of Oakland University.

Olympia Arenas Inc., the company that took over Meadow Brook from Oakland University a year ago, hopes to have an ambitious roster of changes completed by the time the high school graduation ceremonies begin early next month.

The most ambitious expenditure is \$100,000 to expand the south restroom, adding capacity and making it handicap accessible.

Other improvements include:

- paving the Adams Road entrance to the main parking lot;
- adding a concession window to the Trumbull Terrace.
- paving a pathway near the south restroom and installing handrails to comply with the Americans with Disabilities

Act.

- adding menu boards on the concession building facade at the Trumbull Terrace, which is expected to make the food lines move faster;
- hanging more lawn lights from the pavilion canopy.

Stuart Mayer, an events director for Olympia Arenas, said Meadow Brook "about broke even" financially for last year's concert season. With decent weather, Mayer expects to do better this year.

"You're crossing your fingers and kind of rolling the dice sometimes," he said. "So much depends on the weather."

The first Meadow Brook concert will occur June 15 when 10,000 Maniacs hits town.

Area residents might also be interested in the Meadow Brook Landscape and Garden Show, scheduled for June 11-13.

Olympia Arenas, owned by Detroit Tigers and Red Wings owner Mike Ilitch, also runs the Joe Louis Arena, Cobo Hall and the Fox Theater.

TV show audience sought

The folks at WKBD Fox 50 are trying to round up an audience for "Straight Talk," taping at 5 p.m. Friday, May 21, for broadcast the following day at 7 a.m.

The topic of the show, hosted by Andre Makupson, will be the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

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