

Legislature approves state forensic lab fee bill

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

The Senate on Feb. 10 gave 34 to 0 approval to a bill to charge convicts a \$150 fee when the State Police forensic lab was used to help prove their guilt. Judges would be required to levy the fee in addition to any other punishment.

House Bill 4245 is the first by Jerry Vorva, a freshman Republican from Plymouth, to make it all the way through the Michigan Legislature. But there was some scrambling.

"It sounds innocuous — \$150," said Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint.

"The reason they're thieves in the first place is they don't have any money," Conroy voted yes anyway.

An estimated 90 percent of people charged with felonies ask for court-appointed lawyers to aid in their defense.

Senate action came almost five months after the House approved it. All area senators voted yes except two who were absent — Robert Ceake of Northville and David Honigman of West Bloomfield, who recently had surgery.

The bill will become law immediately when Engler signs it. State Police and the city of De-

troit run forensic labs, which do drug analyses, toxicology analyses, examination of latent fingerprints, micro chemistry, serology, firearms, tool marks and questioned documents tests.

The State Police lab has a backlog of work on its budget of \$10.5 million and staff of 163, according to Capt. Richard Lowthion, lab director.

The Senate Fiscal Agency estimated that if fees were collected in 25 percent of cases, \$350,000 in revenue would be generated.

Michigan will become the 17th state to have dedicated fines for forensic labs.

A credit risk? Deadbeat parents who fail to make child support payments will be reported to credit bureaus under a Senate-passed bill.

The bill, on its way to Engler for signing, will require Friend of the Court offices to report delinquencies in child-support payments to credit bureaus.

Orchestra, dancing fill OCC theater

Oakland Community College's Royal Oak campus presents the next program in its "Sensational Senses" entertainment series on Friday, Feb. 18. The event, co-sponsored by the Royal Oak Restaurant Association, features a return engagement by the Hotel Savarine Society Orchestra, a 12-member big band that authentically re-creates popular music of the 1920s and early 1930s.

The concert begins in the campus' Jones Johnson Theater at 8 p.m., showcasing a variety of familiar and not-so-familiar tunes of the "era of wonderful nonsense." A cleared area in front of the stage provides space for those wishing to dance to the vintage two-beat sound.

Hors d'oeuvres will be served 7-8 p.m. by Pronto! 608. Admission for the evening's entertainment is \$10. Advance tickets may be purchased by mail, or at the Royal

Oak campus theater office.

The Hotel Savarine Society Orchestra has been playing its brand of music for Michigan audiences for the last 12 years, performing at such locations as the Ritz Carlton, Westin and Sheraton Hotels, the Fox Theater and Greenfield Village. A few of the familiar songs to be featured in the February performance are "As Time Goes By," "My Blue Heaven" and, of course, the signature

tune of the Roaring '20s — the "Charleston."

The Royal Oak campus is located at 739 South Washington. Free parking is available in the campus' north and south surface lots, as well as in the college parking structure at Lincoln and Washington.

For further information, call the Royal Oak Campus Theater Office at 544-4903, or the Theater Hotline at 544-5588.

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