

# Police seek clues in unsolved killing

By SUSAN TAUBER  
STAFF WRITER

Andrew Lee Vaillencourt. That's a name few people have heard in the last several years. But if the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Homicide Task Force has its way, it's a name that will be heard frequently for awhile in the Oakland County.

At least until the task force determines who killed the 30-year-old Lake Orion man and left his body laying face down in a stream in an Oxford Township field 10 years ago.

"This case was never closed," said Det. Ken Everingham who said the Homicide Task Force was formed to help solve as many as 30 drug-related homicides in Pontiac.

Investigators from the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, the City of Pontiac, Michigan State Police and federal agencies FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Drug Enforcement Agency are on the task force.

Since the task force was formed two years ago, they've indicted more than 20 subjects for murder, conspiracy to murder, robbery and other crimes and identified two major Pontiac drug groups and indicted 30 subjects.

"Now that we've solved so many of these, we're starting on cases that are unsolved," Everingham said.

The task force has already begun looking into Vaillencourt's murder and plan to question several persons, including 10 people who gave testimony to the 1990 Oakland County Grand Jury.

"We think because so much time has gone by, people may be more willing to come forward, to actually get involved. People mature over 10 years and someone who may have been scared to talk then may be willing to talk now," Everingham said. "There's a reward offered for anyone who helps us catch the murderer."

According to an April 4, 1987, Oxford Police Department report, a Metamura man driving along Oakwood Road west of Barber Road spotted Vaillencourt's body. The driver went up to a farmhouse on Oakwood Road and asked to use the phone to notify police.

Police officers found the body of a white male, 5 feet 7 inches tall, 150 pounds, wearing a striped sweater, green jacket, brown pants and brown shoes lying in a culvert in a wheat field.

He was identified by two pieces of paper found on his person. "One of them had his name on it," Everingham said.

An autopsy revealed that Vaillencourt was killed by a blunt trauma to the back of his head and multiple stab wounds to his back.

Everingham said officers suspect Vaillencourt was murdered in a robbery. "We think he might have come into some money," the detective said.

Vaillencourt was last seen leaving Dillinger's Saloon in the Village of Oxford at about 11 p.m., April 2. Reports indicated he may have left with two friends.

No one saw him again until his body was found two days later in the Oxford Township field, which had been fertilized only two days before.

In 1990, an Oakland County grand jury questioned several persons in an attempt to break open the case, but the investigation ran into difficulties and charges were never filed.

The investigation did yield two suspects, however, but neither were charged in the crime.

According to Everingham, one of these suspects has since moved in and out of Michigan; the other is serving a sentence in a Michigan State prison on an unrelated crime.

According to a local resident who remembers Vaillencourt, he was a good-hearted person who was always willing to help others.

"He was a little slow," said the resident, who asked not to be named. "He was a follower. Anybody could tell him to do anything and he would do it, but he was never in trouble with the law as far as I know."

Vaillencourt worked aparently at the Big Boy Restaurant in Oxford and attended adult basic education classes.

"Whoever did it is still out there and deserves to be caught," Everingham and other detectives are asking anyone from the area who remembers anything about Vaillencourt to contact them at (248) 858-2863 or at (248) 858-4911.

# MADD begins safe driving campaign

MADD's Oakland County Chapter is kicking off its 12th annual "Tie One On For Safety-Red Ribbon Campaign" at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday at the Oakland County Commissioner's Auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

Huel Perkins, Fox 2 anchor, is this year's honorary chairman and keynote speaker. Red ribbons will be tied to a representative vehicle from many of the police, fire and rescue units in Oakland County.

Among those present will be state representatives, senators, judges, probation departments, and county officials as well as representatives from Chrysler/Plymouth Superstore Association of Southeast Michigan, the local sponsor, and Allstate Insurance Co. and Precision Tune Autocare, MADD's national sponsors. A reception will follow the ceremony with, and refreshments will be served.

Last year MADD, Oakland,

distributed 300,000 ribbons throughout the county; many can still be seen on car antennas, mirrors, and door handles. Everyone is urged to "tie one on" as a visual pledge not to drink and then drive this holiday season, and hopefully throughout the new year. Alcohol-impaired drivers are responsible for more than 40 percent of all traffic fatalities in Michigan. In 1996, 14,442 people in this state were injured because of alcohol-related crash-

es; 556 people were killed. All these deaths and injuries were avoidable — none have to happen if people will just not drive if they have been drinking, said Michele Compton, MADD, Oakland County Chapter.

MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving and support victims of this violence crime. For more information on MADD, Oakland County Chapter's project "Tie One On For Safety-Red Ribbon Campaign," call (248) 623-8233.

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