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Friday, July 18, 2003

Oakland Briefs

By Detroit News staff reports and wire services.

Waterford Township

Patterson driving hearing starts today

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks
Patterson's reckless driving pretrial hearing is scheduled for 11 a.m. today before Waterford 51st District Judge Richard Kuhn. The charge is related to Patterson being pulled over in Independence Township for allegedly driving erratically after a June 2 golf outing. If convicted, Patterson, who admits he was taking pain pills and drinking wine that day, could face up to 90 days in jail, a \$1,000 fine and a mandatory three-month suspension of his driver's license.

Troy

Man faces charges in thefts of laptops

A man suspected in more than 10 recent daytime thefts of laptop computers and other valuables from Troy office buildings, including a bank executive's office, has been charged in a recent theft. Valester Wilson, 37, of Detroit was arraigned Wednesday before Troy District Judge Michael Martone on charges of larceny from a building, a four-year felony, and two counts of retaining and stealing a credit card. Wilson, whose bond was set at \$75,000 cash, was arrested leaving the SPC Ameritech Building, 100 E. Big Beaver, with two laptop shoulder bags, a wallet, Palm computer and CD player. Police said Wilson, who has a history of convictions, posed as a maintenance worker or donned business clothes to blend in with office environments so he could search out valuables to steal.

Troy Food Fight benefit starts Monday

The ninth Annual Troy Food Fight on Big Beaver begins Monday to alleviate hunger in Oakland County. The friendly food-raising competition encourages Troy businesses, corporations and individuals shopping or conducting business in Troy to collect nonperishable food items and cash donations to benefit the Food Bank of Oakland County. The Food Fight runs through Aug. 1. Collection barrels will be found at more than 30 locations around Troy. The Food Fight on Big Beaver has collected more than 1.2 million pounds of food since 1995.

Farmington

Group fights International Affairs class

The Farmington Public Education Network, F-PEN, is an organization formed by parents to challenge the Farmington Public School's curriculum process, which the group claims fails to adequately inform parents of changes in curriculum. Several parents are outraged by a decision made last month by the district to implement an International Affairs class in the fall. It's the first course in a new menu of International Studies classes being developed in place of American government as a 12th-grade requirement. The policy will take effect beginning with the class of 2006. For information, visit www.f-pen.org.

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Southfield

Arab, Jewish Friends set annual dinner

The American Arab and Jewish Friends have scheduled its annual dinner for 4:30 p.m. Sunday. The event will take place at Il Posto Ballroom in Southfield. Organizers plan to honor American Arab Chamber of Commerce President Ahmad Chebbani and U.S. Rep. Sander Levin, D-Royal Oak, with 2003 community service award for helping facilitate positive relationships and inclusion in the community. High School students Kristina El-Chemor of Hazel Park, Inna Neyman of West Bloomfield and Amani Salami of Dearborn will also receive recognition and scholarships for the organization's essay contest concerning "The Ties That Bind" their communities. For information, call (313) 567-6225.

Southfield

Eight Mile cleanup plan gears up

The annual Clean Team campaign will sweep, paint and recycle its way through 27 miles of Eight Mile from I-94 to I-275. The event is hosted by the Eight Mile Boulevard Association and will take place Monday through Friday. Businesses and residents are encouraged to participate and possibly win a prize. Judging will take place July 30. For information or to register, call Tami Salisbury at (248) 559-8633.

Pontiac

Survival Center garden included on tour

The Women's Survival Center of Oakland County's "Your Rising Star Community Garden" will be the only nonresidential garden on the Pontiac Garden Tour from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The garden was created in 2002 by the center in collaboration with Goldner Walsh Nursery and the Hunger Action Coalition. Every element of the garden was donated. Tickets and maps for the tour can be purchased Saturday at the Betty Stogdill Pancake Shelter, on the corner of Water and Mill Streets, south of the Pontiac Public Library.

Southfield

Ball field for disabled to be selected

The Miracle League of Michigan is expected to announce that the city of Southfield will become home to the state's first baseball field exclusively for disabled children during a July 25 news conference. The organization has been reviewing proposals from Southfield and Troy. The league plans to create a 16,000-square-foot rubberized surface without obstructions, making it easier for children in wheelchairs and crutches to move around. There are seven Miracle League fields in the country. The first was built in 1998 in Conyers, Georgia. A \$500,000 baseball field will be built at the Southfield Civic Center behind the new Southfield Library.

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