

Date Unknown 1960-1980

# Remember the Home farm, and the cattle? Fred Bentley does

Remember the big farm the State Home once operated? Fred Bentley does. He worked on it 18 years.

Bentley, of 638 First St., Lapeer, is now as maintenance supt. at the Home. He served as livestock supt. from 1936 until the farm closed in 1959, except for 3 years when he was in the army.

Bentley remembers the entire farming operation, which covered 1300 acres. He's rather nostalgic when he thinks of the cows and chickens and pigs.

"They're gone now, and he wishes they were back."

"Agnethy killed the farm," he sighed. Before politicians decided it would be cheaper to buy food than produce it on state-owned land with lots of volunteers labor, the Home ran as nice a farm as you'd ever want to see, Bentley said.

The 600 hogs not only disposed of all the institution's garbage, but they also provided bacon, sausage and lard for the patients. Twelve hogs a week were processed in the farm's own slaughterhouse.

An average milking herd of 200 registered Holstein cattle produced 4000 quarts of milk a day. 52 cows earned awards for going over 100,000 lbs of milk in their lives.

Since all this fresh milk was used for drinking, hospital cooks used powdered milk for cooking and baking, Bentley said.

There were also 200 young cattle, he said.

Bentley was proud of the cows. They were one of the first herds in the state to be tested for tuberculosis and Bang's Disease, he said. The Home also boasted a bull which won 1st prize at the National Dairy Show in Waterloo, Ia. about 1946.

1500 Rhode Island Red chickens produced all the eggs needed in the institution. Patients also enjoyed chicken dinners now and then.

Bentley said the Home owned 20 teams of registered Belgian horses and some mules, too. The animals pulled all the plows until about 1927, when the institution purchased its first tractor, a Ford model with lugs.

"It was a hard starter," Bentley said. "Sometimes we had to hitch the horses to it and pull the tractor to get it going."

It was one of the first gasoline tractors in the area.

Bentley said 9 employees worked in the livestock program.

Part of the 1300 acres of farmland was cultivated. A 100-acre garden contained potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, beets, squash, cabbage, lettuce, watermelon, muskmelon, strawberries, and an apple orchard.

"We used to bring wagonloads of watermelon and muskmelon up to the cottages and let the kids eat all they

wanted. It was a real treat," he said.

Even during bumper crop years, patients never had to eat one food until it was gone, he said.

"Flavorwise, food was better back in the late 1950s, and there was little pressure from taxpayers to spend money on such operations. So Iaming let the farm go down the drain."

There were also claims that the patients were exploited. This was not true, Bentley said.

Despite objections, the big farm became a memory in the fall of 1959. Bentley was particularly sorry to see the cows go.

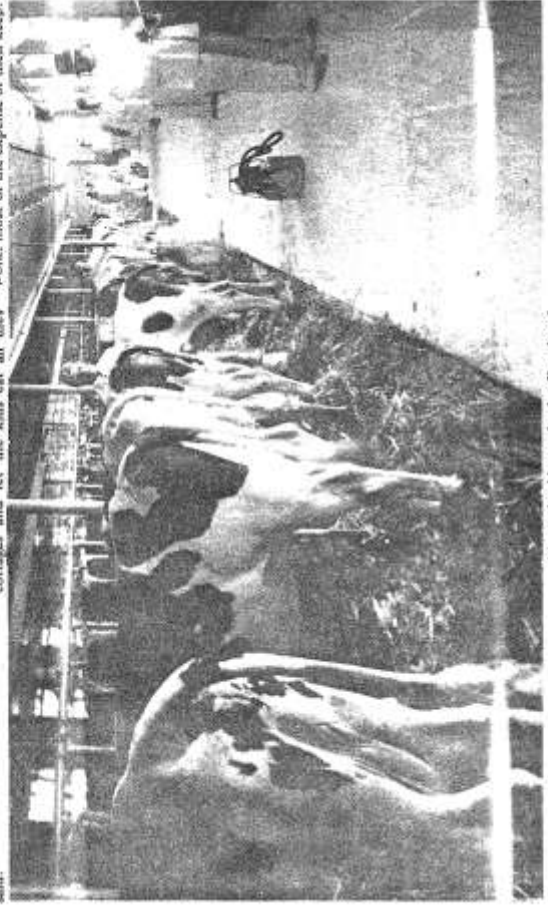
"I was disappointed to see the herd broken up. We had some good cattle," he said. "A man sees only 2 generations of cows during his lifetime. We had things going real good and then they broke it up."

All farm employees were given new jobs when the farm was sold, Bentley

said. Most of the men went into patient care.

There have been many changes in the farmhands since 1959. Many former employees would not recognize it. Some acreage is being leased to local farmers. The dairy barn is now a roller rink. The orchard is a recreation complex. Another farm tools were repaired in the grounds maintenance shop and the bull barn is now a zoo.

The main part of the farm was located on the south side of M-21 and south of Farmers Creek behind the railroad tracks. Another section, originally the Richardson farm, was on the north side of M-21 and east of the jail. This area now includes the senior high school and Luther in Church.



When the Home had a fine herd

Now the government is paying good money to provide these boys with recreation."

There were reasons for the farm's disbanding, Bentley said. The state legislature was hard pressed for money in the late 1950s, and there was little pressure from taxpayers to spend money on such operations. So Iaming let the farm go down the drain.

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Date Unknown Late 1960?-Early 1970s?

Report From the State Home

# Retarded Children Hopeless? Only When They Are Neglected

BY NORMA CLEASON

Jack Berker is a hard man to get information from, sometimes. He's medical director of the Lapeer State Home and Training School. The County Press wanted to do a story on public surgery done at the Home so we set up an interview with Dr. Berker.

The problem was that Dr. Berker is so reserved in all aspects of medical work at the Home. He also likes to see new specialists picked out and joined. It was clear he wished there were some way all the excellent things being done medically there could be written up.

The plastic surgery is wonderful, he says, but how about the internist who has saved a man's life several times? How about the new contagious unit? Dr. Berker has great respect for the abilities of his staff. He has fought

coated and wrapped to get good people. The Home has 13 full time physicians and 2 part-time. Among them are pediatricians in internal medicine, ophthalmologists in internal medicine, ophthalmologists, diseases, ophthalmology, pediatrics, pathology and psychiatry. He has also put together a consulting staff, physicians from the local area and from the 3 universities, to consult with staff physicians or serve as specialists in branches of medicine not represented on the staff.

He's got one consultant, neurosurgeon and is extremely pleased. It's the first time in Lapeer State Home history that we've been able to find one who will come with a "sleeve," he says.

Dr. Berker's university specialists come to the Home on Saturdays, "begin with them," he says, "give them a little bit of their own time, they have to be in the classroom every



DR. JACK BERKER

day. I say, how about weekends? They say, oh, but we need weekends. You don't have to rest every weekend. I tell them, go they come on Saturday and we put a team together — I tell the nurses you work Saturday, take Tuesday off."

foundly retarded patients," he says, "more than usual for us — more patients with defects and physical handicaps — more problem cases."

Last year Dr. Berker proposed building a unit next to the hospital for the physically handicapped and chronically ill. He also wants a 400-bed building for the severely retarded.

And when he hears talk of plans for a public health center in Lapeer he shakes his head. "We need a public health center here, with a public health officer and a public health nurse. It would cost \$100,000. But this is a second Lapeer unit here. You have here a city."

The Home has 1,500 patients and 1,200 employees and is spread over 722 acres. DR. BERKER THINKS there's a great future for Lapeer. "Omelas is a product of my time," he says. He has established a "Circumlocution Club" at the Home. Previously he worked through

(plastic surgery). Dr. Berker explained that the Home had obtained Federal money to help with costs. The reconstructive surgery and orthopedic surgery programs are allied. Together, they permit rehabilitation by modifying congenital physical defects and removing psychological barriers.

When possible, physical defects are corrected, partially or completely. Dr. Berker has many "before" and "after" photographs. Some of the human remodeling done is beyond belief.

One young girl, 28 years old, had a badly deformed face. Due to this defect, she was "out of the community," even there in the institution; "left in the corner," as Dr. Berker puts it.

"Improving her physical appearance with minor plastic surgery gave her a great push psychologically," says Dr. Berker. She now works outside the institution and has already saved up \$400 from her new job.

Dr. Berker explained that the more retarded a patient is, the less he cares about his appearance. "A severely retarded patient may have a big nose," he says, "but it doesn't bother him if you laugh at him. He just doesn't understand your bad reaction. But the psychology component affects those more intelligent."

Two plastic surgeons do the repair work at the Home. Noses are bobbed, cleft palates repaired, misshapen feet and hands corrected. The work is genuinely reconstructive surgery. Most are extreme cases, where a face is truly deformed or where hands or feet cannot function normally.

DOCTORS WORKED on a man who had 2 lumps for hands. They made a separation in the bone and gave him a usable thumb on each hand. Now he can grasp things — something he was unable to do before.

Dr. Berker is especially proud of the new contagious unit. "I challenge any contagious unit in the State of Michigan to be compared with our small contagious unit here at the Home," he says with confidence.

Dr. Berker had some experience with contagious units before coming to the Home 2½ years ago and was not satisfied with Home arrangements. "How can you isolate cases in a general hospital?" he asks. "Yes, you can close the door to the room. . . this is isolation?"

He took cottage 34, a small building, and turned it into a contagious unit in 1965. Then everyone who was selected to work in the unit got special training. "I even took courses myself," he says. "The nurses, the doctors — even the women who wash up the floors got special training."

The idea behind the unit, of course, is protection of other patients.

"IT'S EXPENSIVE," Dr. Berker says, "but worth it." He put a patient suspected of having tuberculosis in the unit. "It takes 2 months to complete the tests," he said, "and in the meantime we didn't know — did she have it or didn't she? — it turned out she didn't, but meantime the other patients were protected."

The new unit holds 12 patients, but expansion is planned.

Dr. Berker said that with modern communities helping to fight the problem of the mentally retarded, and new centers opening, the State Home is getting more severely retarded patients with the easier cases going elsewhere. "We're getting more and more pro-

"Mental retardation is like a headache," says Dr. Berker. "It is not per se a disease, but a symptom of a disease." He points to PKU — phenylketonuria — as an example. A baby with PKU will become mentally retarded because a body chemical needed to assimilate an acid found in foods is lacking.

PKU in newborn infants can easily be determined through a simple urine test and mental retardation avoided through a special diet.

The brochure which the State Home puts out describing its activities and program begins with a quotation from Pearl Buck which describes the policies of the Home itself: "Retarded children are only hopeless when they are neglected."

# State Home faces 1,300 cut in patients

The State Home may begin a major reduction in patients.

About 1,300 would be transferred to new institutions by 1975.

This reduction would be followed by a second cut 5 years later. About 700 more patients would be moved.

By 1990, the Home's population may dwindle from the present 3,347 to only 700.

"This is only a projection, and not a definite plan as yet," said Dr. Anthony Abruzzo, the Home's medical director.

The projections are contained in a study made by the State Mental Health Dept.

Dr. Abruzzo said he hopes the Home's 1,268 employees will not be affected.

"I will certainly not go along with any plan that reduces the size of the employee staff," he said Friday.

Patient reduction hinges on plans to build new facilities throughout the state. The study recommends construction of many small institutions near large urban areas.

Giant state homes, such as Lapeer's,

would be scaled down or closed.

The Lapeer State Home is among four which may be closed completely by 1990.

The building program would cost the state about \$214 million in the next 5 years. Communities receiving new institutions may be asked to contribute, according to Dr. Abruzzo.

"We haven't had any official meetings on this to discuss it more fully. But I can see it happening if communities proceed at the same rate they've been going," he said.

"It won't be too long now before we know if it will happen. But I don't know what steps the department will take to implement the plan," said Dr. Abruzzo.

The state plan is similar to one proposed last spring by Home officials. They had recommended a reduction of 1,400 patients by 1980.

"We proposed the plan to the central office about 8 months ago," Dr. Abruzzo said.

"We feel there should be a reduction in the number of residents (patients), but not in the staff," he said.

Abruzzo said patients are not receiving adequate care and training because the Home is understaffed.

Individual care would be possible by maintaining current manpower, he said.

"You'll get results if you have more people to work with these kids," said Abruzzo.

In 1960, the Home had 3,850

residents and 1,031 employees. Since then, patients decreased 500 in number, and the staff increased more than 250.

If a major reduction is ordered, the Home would be remodeled to serve remaining patients.

The state study recommends construction of hospitals in 8 areas. They are Detroit, Macomb, Flint, Grand Rapids and Saginaw Bay.

New state home and training schools would be built in 7 large urban areas, including Oakland and Macomb counties.

Institutions for the mentally ill would serve between 500 and 1,000 patients each.

Facilities for the mentally retarded

would serve between 500 and 800 patients.

The health department study was dated last Sept. 29. It had been kept under wraps until an unnamed Lansing source slipped it to the Tuscola County Advertiser last week.

Rep. Roy Spencer (R-Attica) said the legislature has not yet been given the report.

"It sounds idealistic to me," Spencer said. "It's a good idea but it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Spencer said the experts often prepare idealistic, long-range reports in many fields, including education.

"The trouble is people don't accept them," he said.

## Snowmobilers warned

Snowmobilers got a warning from Lapeer City Hall Monday.

"We're receiving complaints about snowmobilers being driven on streets and on private property without the permission of the owners," City Manager Arnold Whitney said. "This is against the law and violators will be ticketed."

Other complaints are that the snowmobilers are noisy and interfere with TV reception. "This is disturbing the peace and violators can be prosecuted

under city ordinances," Whitney said.

Some neighbors have complained about snowmobilers whizzing around on school property. Until the school complains about trespassing, these people could be ticketed for disturbing the peace, Whitney said.

"Mostly, we are worried about people driving snowmobilers on the street. The machines are too low and can't be easily seen by motorists. We're afraid someone is going to be killed or injured," Whitney said.

## Health Dept hikes fees

Increased health department fees...

## No schooling provided

# Twins were State Home wards for 20 years — by mistake

Twin brothers, judged retarded by mistake, spent 20 years in wards of the Lapeer State Home. The disclosure was made Sunday in The Flint Journal.

The twins, Ronald and Donald Cowan, were placed in the Home in 1950. They were 22 months old. They're 21 now.

When the brothers were about four, they were placed in a foster home with Mrs. Mary Montgomery. She operated a farm at this Hollow Corners Rd. Dryden.

Until they were 18, the pair helped raise cows, hogs, chickens and corn.

Mrs. Montgomery taught them basic reading and math. They never attended a school until fleeing the farm at 18.

Ronald was given a 10-year-old while a Home patient. One test was given when he was about 4. The next when he was 18.

"I suppose that's something we're wide open on if somebody wanted to find fault with the State Home," said Fred Campbell, its information officer.

But Campbell said the community must share the blame for its failure to educate the Cowans.

"I think it's an accurate reflection of the kind of things that happen here. By here I'm talking about the community as a whole," he said.

The Cowans are Negroes. The boys didn't attend Woodside School (at the Home) because we felt the community itself would exercise its responsibility to provide them with a public school education.

If you want to call this discrimination, there's not a better word for it," he said.

"Hindsight tells us maybe the community didn't exercise its responsibility, and maybe they should have attended Woodside," said Campbell.

Miss Esther Conley was the social worker responsible for the brothers. She said she wanted to get the pair into a country school near the farm, but it closed.

And there was a thing about Negroes in that area," she said. Late in 1967, the brothers moved to Flint. They became foster sons of the late Janna Cox and his wife.

"I just about died when I heard the boys had never been to school."

and I decided to do all in my power to help them get an education," said Mrs. Cox.

Ronald is now taking basic education classes through the Mort Program. He has almost reached the junior high school level in English and mathematics.

After graduation, he'd like to go to college to become a social worker.

"Miss Conley told me the boys had brains of a 3-year-old and always would have," said Mrs. Montgomery. She no longer lives in Dryden.

Ronald started asking about school when he was 15. But Mrs. Montgomery told him he was better off on the farm.

The social worker had told her "Ronald and Donald will learn more here with you than in school," Mrs. Montgomery said.

The brothers now attend Haddon school in Flint. Ronald gives 10 hours per week, and Donald 4 hours.

Last year, Ronald wanted to buy a car to drive from work and school. But to get a license, he had to be released from the Home. He was released last May.

Donald remains a ward of the Home.

"I think he's unemployed and doesn't have nearly the capacity of his brother. It's our feeling he needs continued support," said Campbell.

"If these 2 boys would have come to us today, they probably wouldn't even have been admitted to the State Home. Their needs would be served right in the community where they lived," he said.

Recently, Robert F. Gibson, assistant director of social services, told Ronald.

"Knowing what we know now about you, we should have done it differently. We didn't do all we could, we agree now, but we made those judgments then, and we're still proud that what success you've achieved, we helped by placing you in a foster home."

When Ronald's legal rights were restored, he became eligible for the draft. He's facing induction now because the draft laws don't allow high school exemptions after a man is 21.

U.S. Rep. Donald Riegle Jr. of Flint is attempting to prevent Ronald's induction.



## Oakdale in the Newspapers

# A SPECIAL SALUTE TO THE Lapeer State Home & Training School

Articles, pictures and ads in this section are dedicated to the State Home and its employees in recognition of the worthwhile service performed there for 75 years. Lapeer County appreciates what the Home has done for the retarded - and for the county.

All the Home articles are by Margie Wood of The Press staff.

## State Home has 75th birthday

The Lapeer State Home celebrates its 75th anniversary this month. In 75 years, many changes have taken place at W. Genesee and Millville Roads.

The history of the institution begins in 1893 when the Michigan legislature appropriated \$50,000 for a Home for the Feeble-minded and Epileptic. Gov. John T. Koch of Lapeer influenced the lawmakers' decision to build the facility in Lapeer.

Options were received for purchase of land adjacent to that donated to the State by Lapeer citizens. The total was over 500 acres.

The Home opened Aug. 1, 1895, with 200 patients. Nearly 600 applications for admission were placed on a waiting list for the first year. Preference was given to intractable youth.

Divided into 8 sections of 25, the inmates were constantly watched. Every habit of their daily lives was regulated, directed and molded to conform to the best type of physical, mental and moral perfection possible with a defect, according to Supt. W. A. Polglase in his first report to the Board of Control.

Daily life was made to resemble, as nearly as possible, the "home life" with its duties, responsibilities, privileges and little joys and sorrows, Polglase said.

The institution's school opened Sept. 11, 1895, with 23 pupils. Children were drilled in marching, singing, calisthenics, sewing, crocheting, knitting and other fancy work. Music was considered important and a band was formed.

Persons over 6 who are feeble-minded or epileptic or so deficient as to be incapable of being educated at any ordinary school and who are not insane, paralyzed, extremely helpless or afflicted with contagious disease may be admitted," school officials said.

In April, 1898, 7 patients were struck with scarlet fever. Each was isolated in the hospital. There were no deaths.

The administration building, a 4-story structure, opened in March, 1904. It provided office space, residence for the superintendent and his family, general dining room for officers and teachers, reception parlor, trustees' room, store rooms and kitchens.



HOME PATIENTS enjoy the spacious grounds

A combined chapel and amusement hall also opened in 1904. It met requirements for both religious services and recreation activities. A bowling alley and gymnasium were built in the basement. The structure burned in 1938. G. L. Chamberlain succeeded Polglase as superintendent in 1907. Chamberlain

was a former employee of the Hospital for the Insane at Newberry.

In Nov. 1910, a smallpox epidemic struck the institution. Dr. John V. Frazier of the Lapeer Board of Health placed the Home under quarantine until Dec. 23. There were 17 deaths. A cemetery was established for the victims

behind the railroad tracks to the east of the institution.

Patient enrollment in July, 1912, was 1,123. Since the Home opened in 1895 until July, 1914, the institution had cared for 2,113 patients.

Home officials asked the State Legislature to rename the Home in 1913.

"They complied, and rechristened as the Michigan Home and Training School, a name with all semblance of stigma removed," wrote the Board of Control in its 1914 report to Lansing.

Chamberlain resigned as superintendent in 1912 and was replaced by H. A. Haynes, assistant medical superintendent. In 1918 Supt. Haynes received a salary of \$3,800 a year. He and his family lived in a 4-bedroom apartment on the second floor of the Administration building.

From World War I until after World War II, the institution grew rapidly. Officials blame what they called the "uncontrolled growth" of this period on a widespread philosophy that the community should be protected from the mentally retarded. Thus, patients were admitted as quickly as buildings could be constructed for them to live in.

The result was overcrowding and substandard living conditions. This was known as the "warehouse" era. "As far as I know, this institution has never been an abusive place. It was sheer overcrowding, not malice or carelessness, that caused the warehouse conditions," said Charles S. Pearson, administrative officer.

This steady increase in size reached its zenith in 1948 when 4216 residents were crowded in the institution. Some of these patients were opium who had no place else to go. "They used to run away," said Pearson. "If they weren't found in a year they were discharged," he said.

The uncontrolled growth came to a halt in the late 1940s when Supt. A. T. Rehn appealed to the Mental Health

Department to observe poor conditions at the Home. The Department, convinced of the need for reform, granted a prompt bed reduction.

Also influencing the movement to improve conditions at Lapeer was the Lapeer Parents Association, organized in the early '50s. Parents, friends and relatives of patients complained about substandard conditions at the Home.

Along with changes in the physical plant, a new attitude concerning the mentally retarded was born in the '50s.

People began looking at mental retardation as a condition, not an illness, Pearson said. And the retarded were finally accepted as having human needs, rights and dignity. "They were 1 of the last to be accepted as human beings," Pearson said.

Officials began questioning the necessity of institutionalizing the retarded. They asked why the mentally handicapped could not remain in the community with assistance from community services.

Today this change in attitude has taken hold. The current philosophy concerning the retarded is to keep them home if possible. As a result, the need for large institutions is declining today. Enrollment at Lapeer is dropping about 200 a year, officials said.

Today the Home cares for about 2800 persons. By 1978 the figure is expected to drop to 1500, or less, that half the current enrollment. It may even go lower than that.

"The ultimate is not having institutions," Pearson said.

## Home patients have 5 training programs

# New concept cuts boredom, adds zing to patients' lives

Len was a window breaker. Especially when strangers were near, this 34-year-old patient of the Lapeer State Home became so upset he shoved his hands through window panes. He was often cut seriously.

When Len was not violent he was usually lethargic. Employees allowed him to sleep hour after hour. Fewer problems were created that way for busy attendants. When he awoke, Len was often given tranquilizers and other strong medication.

Last October a new concept was initiated in Len's building. It changed his life. Developed by Ken Kreger, behavioral treatment program director, and other staff members, it's called compensatory environment and it's unique to Lapeer. Mrs. Mary Kay Moore, program specialist, said the system has never before been used with the mentally retarded in a state institution.

Chosen for the experiment were cottages 7 and 33 West. The former is an old building at the rear of the institution. It houses 82 severely and profoundly retarded middle-aged men.

Cottage 33 West is the home of 124 severely and profoundly retarded women from 16 to 30. Both buildings were chosen because of the behavior problems presented by the residents.

In examining the living environment in these cottages, the programmers discovered that the residents lived in an environment of unvaried routine. They got up and ate breakfast at the same time, dressed in the same clothes, sat in dayrooms in the same chairs with the same people and went to bed at the same

hour. The pattern rarely varied.

Attendants discovered that even the severely retarded were bored with their monotonous lives. They learned that the so-called bizarre and disturbed behavior of the retarded was the same behavior of normal individuals deprived of sensory stimulation for short periods of time.

Kreger and his staff initiated their program with hopes that the sterile lives of the patients could be made more exciting.

One aim was to eliminate overcrowding. This was done by employing every possible space in the building. Furnace rooms, closets, offices and out-of-the-way crannies were opened to patients.

Residents were also divided into several small groups. Instead of 40 persons in 3 large dayrooms, there are now 5 groups of 25 in cottage 33.

Fewer people in 1 area creates less tension and provides opportunities for patients to express their individuality. Instead of being another face in a crowd, patients are now individuals in the eyes of attendants.

Another aim was to bombard residents with all kinds of sensory stimulation. "Something is going on all the time but there's no routine now so patients don't know what to expect," Mrs. Moore said.

Employees are encouraged to use novel approaches to breaking the monotony of ordinary cottage life. No idea is considered absurd if it is within the reasonable limits of humane care and if it provides stimulation for the patients, according to Kreger.

Among the activities tried so far are planting a garden, going for walks in small groups, riding bicycles, taking fishing lessons, repairing furniture, setting up large rolls of paper across dayroom walls for coloring, polishing stones and even going outdoors at night to observe the sky.

The result of all this is an extreme change in residents' attitudes, Mrs. Moore said.

The men, who avoided strangers, now converse with them. They get into fewer fights and require less medication.

The women, who used to crowd around attendants and visitors, are now more reserved. Confusion, noise and personality conflicts have decreased, said Mrs. Madeline Cyr, cottage 33 supervisor.

Robert Dontje, cottage 7 supervisor, said that although the program has been a great success, it is not without problems.

Residents' privileges are becoming rights in their eyes, he said. "They decide they want to do something right now and we have to explain why it's not always possible," he said.

This desire for activity is in many cases considered a step forward. Some employees have had to change their thinking in their relationships with these patients. "Last year the staff wanted to do everything for them. Now they find the children can do all kinds of things for themselves," Mrs. Cyr said.

Today Len is a new man. "He has been included in work and recreational activities in the building. He seems to enjoy working and thrives on the compliments he receives. He has

attended all the recreational activities including fishing, picnics, ball games and field trips to the zoo and has behaved well. Since the program went into effect last October, Len has broken only 3 windows. In 1969 he broke 16 windows," Mrs. Moore said.

"Our pioneer efforts paid off beyond our great expectations. We were all surprised to note the very rapid and tremendous reduction in episodes of disturbed behavior simply by the modification of the environment."

"In special cases individual residents have had to be programmed for by special preparation. But these cases, interestingly enough, were far fewer than would have been predicted had we only focused on 1-by-1 case prescriptions rather than on a fundamental change in the environment," wrote Kreger in a report presented at the Michigan Association for Retarded Children in Marquette in June.

Kreger said the association's response was enthusiastic to the new concept.

"The needs of the severely and profoundly retarded have long been ignored. When something unique is introduced to the field it is well-received, especially in a parents' group like the MARC," he said.

Kreger said the compensatory environment concept is here to stay.

"As our census here is reduced and we are able to introduce it to other buildings, it will probably become a standard mode of operation in dealing with the severely and profoundly retarded," he said.

## Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, August 6, 1970 (continued)

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LAPEER COUNTY PRESS

# Will my child be Mongoloid? Genetics lab gives the odds

The Lapeer State Home hospital morgue was the birthplace of what is today 1 of the best equipped and staffed genetics laboratories in Michigan.

Dr. Isak O. Berker, hospital medical director, said the laboratory began operation in 1966 with no money and in borrowed space.

"We met with James Higgins, associate professor of genetics at Michigan State University and decided to do some chromosome studies. He and a graduate student worked in the morgue because there was no other place for them," he said.

A few months later, their work was appreciated by the State and the hospital received a \$10,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Mental Health. One hospital room was converted into a real laboratory and John Secord, a laboratory technician, was hired as supervisor.

Basically, the first 2 years of operation were financed as a research project by the State, Berker said. The laboratory received \$10,000 each year. Since 1968, the facility has been included in the overall budget of the Home, he said.

Today 2 full-time employees, 5 college students, and Dr. Higgins are involved in research. They use nearly \$70,000 worth of equipment, according to Secord.

Secord said the laboratory is now concentrated in 3 rooms in the west wing of the hospital. Dr. Higgins serves as genetics consultant and also codirector of the laboratory with Dr. Berker. He works in Lapeer at least 1 day a week.

Secord said the laboratory's main benefit is genetics counseling. This is provided free to anyone in Michigan.

"A family having a child with a genetic abnormality can discuss the problem with an experienced geneticist. He can advise them of the possibility of having another child with the same disease," Secord said.

For example, a 22-year-old mother with a Mongoloid baby asks about her chances of having another such child. Chromosome studies are done on the child and sometimes on the parents also. The results, plus the age of the mother, gives the scientist an indication of the probability of reoccurrence.

Mongolism most frequently occurs in older mothers. "If women over 40 did not have children, 90% of our Mongoloids would not be here," he said.

Secord pointed out that about 10% of the mentally retarded in institutions are Mongoloids. Also called Down's Syndrome, this condition is the result of 1 extra G chromosome. Instead of the normal 46 chromosomes, the Mongoloid has 47.

Of the remaining 90% retarded in institutions, Secord said less than 5%



**JOHN SECORD**, genetics laboratory supervisor at the State Home, tests patients for biochemical abnormalities in the blood. The complicated machine with yards of plastic tubing is an \$8000 autoanalyzer bought with Federal funds last year. Reading the results is Nina Maples, a laboratory technician.

have other chromosomal abnormalities and less than 10% have inborn errors of metabolism.

Most cases of mental retardation are due to sociocultural and organic factors. Many drugs, including aspirin, if taken during pregnancy are responsible for brain defects, according to Dr. Berker. Since brain cells do not reproduce, damage is permanent, he said.

Environment is also an important factor, said Community Relations Director, Fred Campbell. A home where there is little sensory stimulation, such as in ghettos, stifles the mind and leads to retardation, he said.

The laboratory's present project is screening patients in Michigan institutions for the mentally retarded. Researchers are looking for inborn errors of metabolism. This is the third year on the project and they hope to finish this summer, Secord said.

Abnormalities in the blood and urine of the patients will be used for research. "We study them to learn what they are and how they can be prevented in the future," he said.

An example is phenylketonuria. This is the genetic condition marked by the inability to oxidize phenylalanine acid. It results in retardation. Researchers discovered that persons suffering from the disease lack a certain enzyme which helps use the acid. The acid accumulates

in the blood and causes brain damage. Today, the condition can be corrected in certain cases by a strict diet containing no phenylalanine acid.

"This research probably won't help anybody who is institutionalized now. Most genetic abnormalities can't be cured. The benefit is for future generations," Secord said.

Equipment used in the research was purchased last year with a \$35,000 federal grant. "Due to lack of space for delicate machines at Lapeer, about \$25,000 worth of the equipment is at MSU where 6 to 12 graduate students are doing studies of Lapeer patients," Secord said.

Another major contributor to the research is the Lapeer Parents Association, Berker said. "They give us \$2000 a year with no strings attached," he said.

Lapeer used part of the money to send 6 persons to 3 different classes in New York and Chicago to learn to use the equipment bought by the federal government, Secord said.

These contributions, grants from other private agencies and a dedicated staff have all combined to make Lapeer's laboratory one to be proud of.

"I think we have the best equipped laboratory dealing with genetics in Michigan," Secord said.

It has been our  
pleasure, for the  
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assist you in  
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# It's no longer a 'snakepit,' but Home is crowded and decrepit

The Lapeer State Home has taken many steps forward since the 1940s—the years officials refer to as the "snakehouse" or "snakepit" era.

These were the days orphans, waifs and other unwanted were placed in homes for the retarded because there was nowhere else to put them. This practice, added to the belief that the retarded should be protected from overexposure, resulted in serious overcrowding in our state institutions.

By 1948 the population at the Lapeer Home had reached an all-time high of 4,216. "Attention was given to cots, employees and patients in that order," said Charles S. Pearson, administrative officer.

Supr. A. T. Rehn became so frustrated in 1948 he invited members of the Mental Health Department to observe conditions at Lapeer. They were so impressed they promptly granted a bed reduction. Pearson said.

From then on, more enlightened concepts have been initiated at Lapeer. New and better equipment is used, employees are better trained and both the physical and social sciences have developed better methods of handling problems of the mentally retarded today.

Despite these major improvements, all is not well at Lapeer and other state homes for the retarded. There still are many obstacles to overcome in the care and treatment of the mentally handicapped.

Discrimination is 1 of the biggest and most frustrating problems for patients at Lapeer, according to Community Relations Director Fred Campbell. A shocking example is the case of a 10-year-old Mongoloid boy who was refused admission to an Oakland County hospital because "the hospital does not employ a guard."

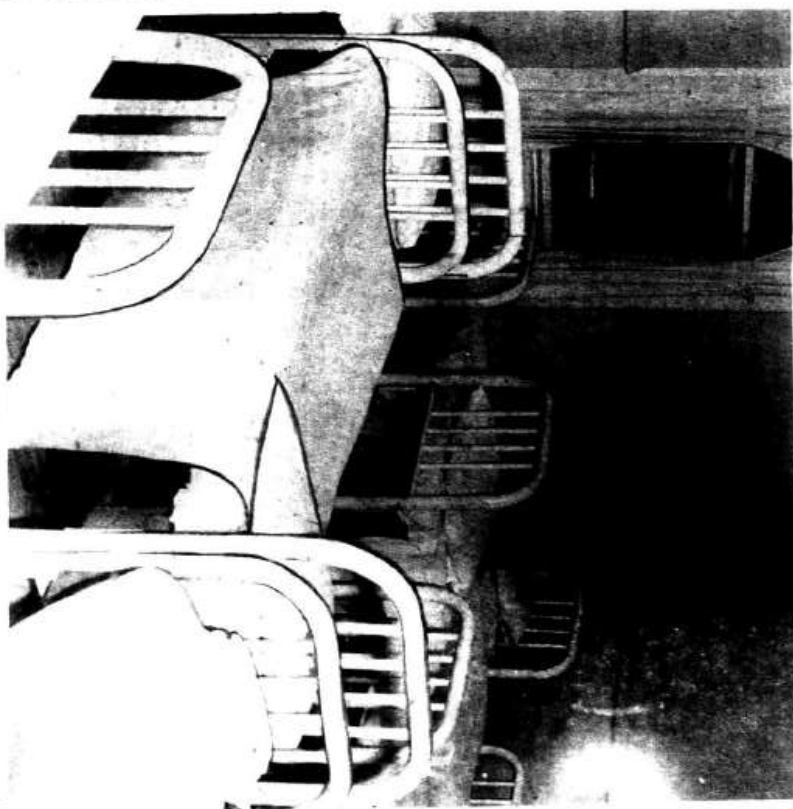
The implication is that the mentally retarded are highly dangerous, Campbell said. "People tend to equate them with the mentally ill. They say 'The mentally ill are dangerous—hence, the mentally retarded are dangerous.'"

Lack of knowledge is to blame for this discrimination, Campbell said. The greatest problem is in the patients' home communities. "It's not such a problem in Lapeer. People here are more understanding," he said.

Another major problem is Lapeer's decrepit physical plant, Campbell said. Falling plaster, faded brown walls, gray tile floors and exposed pipes are ugly reminders of age and financial neglect.

"Money is always a problem," Campbell said. Some equipment and maintenance personnel and materials not included in the institution's budget. Things wear out, and replacements are not always available, he said.

Patients are also subjected to uncomfortable temperatures in their residence halls, Home officials said.



PATIENTS have little privacy

Residents in many buildings suffer in summer and show in winter. Cottages are not air conditioned and the temperature inside has been measured at 100 degrees, said Joe Boninsek, a physical nurse.

A few individual rooms throughout the institution are air conditioned, however. The therapy room in the nursery in an example. Children practice standing and walking in 70 degree temperatures. Several physicians, including Supr. A. M. Abruzzo, installed their own air conditioners in their offices.

Temperature control is a year round problem. Central heating cannot be controlled in individual buildings during the winter. "We get all or nothing. If it gets too hot the only thing we can do is shut the radiators completely off,"

Campbell said. This creates a problem in spring when days are warm and nights are chilly.

Lack of heat is felt most in the basements of older buildings. "They're used frequently today as dining rooms and day rooms but they weren't designed for comfort," he said.

Multiple story buildings are a hazard to physically handicapped residents. Many cottages were built when fewer handicapped patients were admitted. Today blind and orthopedic children have difficulty climbing stairs.

Another disadvantage is the location of the buildings, Campbell said. Patients living in residence halls to the rear of the institution have to walk a great distance to the clinic or general store. New facilities should be arranged in a cluster, Campbell said.

An ever-present problem is lack of privacy. Lapeer patients have little opportunity to be alone. In cottage 21, for example, 12 white iron beds line the walls of a large room. Beside each bed is

a small blue chest for residents' belongings. The chests are a luxury not enjoyed in all cottages. Everyone's clothing is kept in a single room in this building.

In many cases, patients who receive a gift from home must put it in a common storage area. "Adults get jars of coffee from home. What do you do with it?" Put it in a big closet where everybody keeps their coffee. You can imagine what this does to an individual. Lack of privacy is degrading," Campbell said.

"The staff is painfully aware of this problem and is trying to do something about it. But due to the large number of people in such limited space, little can be done without major remodeling," he said.

Many of these problems are being partially solved by returning patients to the community and by working to prevent their admission in the first place. "Community placement in general is a better alternative than lifetime institutional care," Campbell said. By 1978 Home officials hope to serve only 1,500 resident patients. Current

## State Home will spend \$14 million this year

Operation of the Lapeer State Home will cost nearly \$14 million this year, according to Charles S. Pearson, administrative officer.

The lion's share will go to employees. About \$11 million will be spent for salaries, wages and fringe benefits to 1320 staff members. Another million is in the form of retirement benefits, Pearson said.

The remaining \$2½ million pays for supplies, food, equipment, drugs and miscellaneous commodities. Many repair and maintenance items are additional expenses, Pearson said.

Although most of the money comes from Lansing, there are several other sources of revenue. The Federal government appropriated about \$150,000 for specific projects such as

population is now about 2800. This patient reduction will also help alleviate the problem of understaffing, Campbell said.

According to the American Association of Mental Deficiency and the American Psychiatric Association, Lapeer should maintain a 1-1 staff-resident ratio.

"This is financially prohibitive with 2800 residents. The legislature wouldn't allow it because we'd have to almost double the number of employees. I don't think anybody in the state believes this is possible," Campbell said.

Something close to this ratio could be reached, however, by reducing the resident population while maintaining the 1:20 employees.

"The Home has been given assurance from the governor's office down that we will be able to reduce the 1320 employees with the aid of the state. The legislature may take a better view of the situation," Campbell said.

Title I and about \$100,000 in money and goods is donated every year, Home officials said.

Responsible relatives of a patient may be required to pay up to \$15 a day for maintaining the patient in the institution. This money goes directly into the General Fund of the State of Michigan. The Department of Revenue determines whether the spouse or parent will pay all, part or none of the cost. They are liable until the resident is 21 or has been a patient for 15 years, whichever occurs first.

Patients themselves are always liable for care and maintenance charges. Any estate left to the resident, other than a burial fund or Social Security, will be applied toward past and future care of the resident.



## All Home patients arrive and leave through 1 'door'

The Outpatient Department is the "front door" to the Lapeer State Home. All patients admitted to the institution are channeled through this office.

The department was created in 1964 to evaluate persons on the waiting list and to help establish programs to fit their individual needs, according to Dennis Heller, administrative assistant to the superintendent.

Today the department's goal is to keep patients in the home community, said Mrs. Clara Mylin, coordinator. This is partly accomplished by screening applicants for admission and by offering a home visiting service to families of retarded children, the staff said.

Persons considered for admission are evaluated in detail by a team of specialists. Prospective patients receive evaluations by a psychologist and social worker and a general physical examination which includes a chest x-ray, dental exam and genetic lab work.

After these individual reports are finished, a special conference is held on each retardee. The data is discussed by the department team and a recommendation is made to the parents. Some individuals are recommended for admission and others are advised to remain at home.

Persons recommended for admission are placed in 3 categories, Heller said. Emergency admission indicates the community is unable to provide adequate services for the individual. Institutionalization is mandatory. Regular admission is awarded to those whose needs are not at least partially met at home. They will enter the State Home when a vacancy occurs.

Today 10% of the patients on the waiting list today are on deferred status. "These people do not want admission at this point. Their needs are not adequately met in their homes. Someday they will require admission and they will want it immediately. It's like an insurance policy for them," he said.

In addition to the main office in the hospital, the department maintains field offices in Oakland and Genesee,



THE STANFORD-BINET Intelligence Test is administered to a retarded woman during an evaluation in the Outpatient Department.

Coulties. Two home visitors help parents train their retarded children and help them find local assistance.

"Sometimes, we're just listeners so parents can talk about their retarded children," Mrs. Mylin said.

Occasionally parents are unable to accept their retarded children. Sometimes their rejection is due to emotional problems of the parents themselves before the child was born, she said.

"Also, doctors usually don't paint a very pleasant picture when they tell parents they have a retarded child," she said. "Some parents are new despair when they contact the Outpatient Department for help, she said."

Mrs. Mylin said her office does not always wait for parents to come to her. "We hear of people who need advice and contact them," she said.

Mrs. Mylin emphasized that residents are not always institutionalized for life. With community services such as the Department of Social Services, many patients are returned to their parents or to foster homes.

Employed in the department are staff Mylin, E.W. McLeod, M.D., pediatrician; Mrs. Martha Miller, psychologist; Mrs. Martha Miller, social worker; Mrs. Ruth Eastman, and Joe Bolinack, practical nurse; and Mrs. Sharon Dodge, home visitor. Another home visitor will be hired this summer.

## Congratulations

We are fortunate to have, as a part of our community, The Lapeer State Home and Training School and its employees.

We salute you for the excellent work you do at the Home and in the community. We hope you will continue to make great progress in the area of mental health.

Happy 75th Anniversary to all of you.

**RUSSELL'S DRUG STORE**  
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# Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, August 6, 1970 (contiuned)

## State Home population is dropping about 200 per year

The Lapeer State Home and Training School provides a home for 2,000 mentally retarded persons. Until the 1950's it was the only such institution in Michigan. Now it serves a 10 - county area.

Mental retardation is a serious and complex social problem. Six million persons in the United States suffer from some form of mental retardation. Of those, 240,000 live in Michigan. 80,000 of them are school-age children, only 212 of whom are currently receiving special training, according to the Michigan Department of Health.

There are many causes of mental retardation. Some are genetic in origin, and many are sociocultural. Of the 240,000 retarded in Michigan, about 222,000 are classified as mildly retarded. The rest are termed moderately, severely, or profoundly retarded. Characteristics of the different levels are:

—Mild (IQ 50-70) Can adjust socially and hold a job in most cases with special education and training. Referred to as educable retarded.

—Moderate (IQ 35-49) Is capable of self-care and could hold an unskilled or semi-skilled job. Referred to as trainable retarded.

—Severe (IQ 20-34) Is capable of learning basic self-care skills and could participate in sheltered workshop activities but requires protected living situation.

—Profound (IQ below 20) Requires lifetime care and supervision.

The Michigan Department of Health

operates 9 state facilities for the retarded in addition to Lapeer. They are at Cape Cod, Coldwater, Fort Custer, Gaylord, Howell, Mt. Pleasant, Muskegon, Newberry and Piquette.

Lapeer, the oldest facility, opened in 1895. The newest, Muskegon, opened last year.

Many retarded persons do not require 24-hour care. Development of alternative services such as day training, sheltered workshops and group homes has reduced the need for expensive residential care.

In the last 10 years, Michigan has experienced a large drop in general population. Despite this, the number of commitments to state facilities for the retarded has dropped. From 1967 to 1969, commitments dropped almost 10%. This reduction is due to the increased availability of alternative services.

Day training centers are an example of community services. These centers provide a developmental training program and an alternative to institutional care of a severely retarded individual.

Fred Campbell, community relations director at Lapeer, said the population at the home is decreasing about 200 a year. By 1975, there probably will be only 1,500 residents, or less than 1/2 the population today.

This reduction will be due to efforts to prevent admission by providing services to the retarded within the home community and by returning certain patients to their homes when these services are available.

Michigan's first day training center was opened in 1964 in Port Huron. Today, centers are available in 80 locations. They are funded by the state and operated by local agencies under contract to the Department of Mental Health. Cost of the operation is estimated at \$2.6 million.

**Congratulations Lapeer State Home and Training School . . . on your 75th Anniversary**



**It's a pleasure serving you and your many employees.**

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# Woodside students learn by doing

Practical, down-to-earth instruction is the goal of teachers at the Woodside School. Emphasis is on learning by doing.

Mrs. Geneva Gerlings, director of education, said 640 students, ages 4 to 21, attend classes year round in the \$1 million facility at the State Home.

Educable patients attend school about 5 hours a day. Half their time is spent in home room sessions where they study reading, writing, arithmetic, science and social studies. Children participate in special classes such as physical education, arts and crafts, homemaking, woodwork, music and speech in the afternoon.

Less capable students, called young trainables, attend from 2 to 4 hours a day. They have 1 home room session and 1 or 2 special classes.

The regular 42-week school session runs from September until June. Two clerks, 27 teachers and 3 administrators are employed in the program. 34 teachers work in the 10-week summer session.

Smaller classes with more instructors in summer makes for more individual attention, Mrs. Gerlings said.

Textbooks at Woodside School are the exception rather than the rule. Teachers employ the unit method of study. Mrs. Gerlings said. Reading, spelling, arithmetic and geography lessons may all center around a field trip.

For example, children talk about where they will go and what they will see. The words they use compose their spelling lists. They read stories where the characters ride buses and see animals, just as the students often do.

Arithmetic lessons are often taught at grocery stores where children add up food prices. Geography is also learned during field trips.

One group of students recently traveled to Storybook Gardens in London, Ont. This is a small-scale Disneyland complete with Mother Goose characters, Mrs. Gerlings said.

Many hours in the summer are spent outdoors. "We are anxious to have children outside. We don't want a classroom situation in summer. We try to give them all the community experience we can," she said.

The 26 classrooms in this school for the retarded look much like those in any elementary school. One room, where youngsters were working on craft projects, contained a greenhouse, aquarium and art colony. There were colorful bulletin boards, posters and an American flag.

Down the hall, an older group of children listened while a child's voice on a record sang an alphabet song. These



HEADING FOR the woods to spread wood chips on the nature trail are 2 Outdoor Education classes at Woodside School. Driving the tractor is Duane Dodds. Standing next to him is Lyle Boyle. Both are teachers from North Branch.

children were planning a field trip and had just finished making lunch bags from brown paper sacks. Bright crayons and colorful construction paper turned the dish sacks into possessions to be proud of.

In still another room, boys and girls were enjoying tender waffles. It was a home economics class and students were learning not only to cook but also to eat properly.

"We need a lot of diversified activities for these children because their attention span is shorter than the average child's," Mrs. Gerlings said.

The school library is an interesting room. Audio-visual equipment is used frequently here. Slides, film strips, 16-mm film, educational TV programs and records are popular learning devices.

Nearly 4000 books line the library walls. These are special books donated by the Michigan State Library. They are appropriate for retarded youngsters since most of them contain many big, pretty illustrations and little printed matter. These books may be checked out by any patient, Mrs. Gerlings said.

display their athletic prowess.

"We feel quite honored that our children are capable enough to do this. It's such a rare opportunity for them," Mrs. Gerlings said.

She said the visit to WMU was an exciting experience for the children.

"They lived in a college dormitory and ate in the cafeteria where they were allowed to select their own food. This is very unusual," she said.

The children attended a big dance where they danced with patients from other parts of the state. They also went

to a banquet where they used lovely china and crystal. "There's where all our training paid off. They know what to expect wherever they go. You can do what wherever you are. You can imagine all the excitement and fun this kind of situation provides for them," she said.

## Best Wishes

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AUGUST 6, 1970

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS

# Recreation Department makes sure the kids have fun

A term wheel, potter's wheel, cotton candy, and train rides through a dark tunnel. Sound like fun? Well it is, for 2800 mentally retarded residents of the Lapeer State Home and Training School. Thanks to an enlightened and dedicated recreation department, even the most withdrawn "littles" are emerging to experience the common joys of childhood.

The institution's recreation program, directed by Robert Powell, has come a long way since the days of "let's read up the boys for a holiday" type affair. Ten years ago amusement was considered an ill-fated luxury at Lapeer. Today, the Home boasts 1 of the finest recreation complexes of its kind anywhere.

"Even now we're constantly striving to upgrade our program," said Steve Huelga, assistant director. "We work with all types of patients, from the profoundly retarded to the educable, so we have to adjust, anticipate and modify to serve everyone."

Powell, his staff of 11 full-time employees and 10 college students work hard to provide novel and stimulating experiences for their "children."

One of the most popular projects in the recreation park at the southwest corner of the grounds. Located in the rear of the regular complex of buildings, it is remote enough to offer a change of scenery but close enough to make transportation simple.

Opened in 1965, the 5-acre park operates 12 hours a day 5 days a week in warm weather.

Take a trip to the park and you'll find the first thing you'll see is the main road lake, dug by the institution's maintenance men. The little lake is stocked with several kinds of fish. Patients catch them while taking sailing lessons from attendants. Some of the fish are big enough to keep.

Circling the lake on its 4 mile track is a 64-passenger carousel train called the Lake Special. Children board it from an old-fashioned platform similar to the one used in the Disneyland fair train. Along the train's path are signs such as "Slow Curve" and "Entering Tunnel, Please Remain Seated" mark the train's progress.

A pontoon boat glides quickly across the lake. Children on the boat wave to those on the train speeding by.

Up the slope from the lake is a little roller wheel with a red and white striped frame and blue cars. It takes patients for exciting rides into the sky.

What's a park without a merry-go-round? This park has 1. A 40-foot affair with 20 moving horses, this merry-go-round even plays authentic gallop music.

Two rubber tire trains take children for tours around the park. The Surplus Special and the Blue Train carry 24 youngsters in 15 adults each.

The engine of the Surplus Special is painted black with white trim. Its cars are bright red with white trim. "The fringe around the car is of plastic. It is 10 feet long.

Both trains were made by Home employees from army surplus materials. The engines were once warehouse tow tractors and the cars were air conditioning units.

Ingenuity is apparent in other areas of the park, too. Instead of discarding 2 wooden spoons which held power cable, maintenance men painted them in bright colors and placed them on the grass for

children to climb on.

A busy place is Farmer Potter's Barn, just east of the park. It was named after Larry Potter, a staff supervisor, who helped develop the project.

Local people lend their animals to the Home during the summer. They come after them in the fall when the barn closes. The children pet and feed goats, calves, sheep, pigs, chickens, cattle and geese. Spike the deer belongs to the institution.

Also included in the park are 4 shelter areas, picnic tables, outdoor grills, a fireplace, fully-equipped kitchen and restroom facilities.

Patients from 10 cottages use the park every weekend. Picnics are held there from 4 to 8 p.m. 12,000 to 14,000 hotdogs and hamburgers are prepared in the kitchen every year by the college students who help supervise the park. Each patient enjoys 2 sandwiches, french fries and a cold drink at the picnic.

The park will become a carnival area from Aug. 18-21, this year. 14 game booths will provide fun and prizes for everyone. A Trunk Train will give away popcorn, cotton candy, ice-cream in ice cream. All rides will be in full operation.

The institution's 2 buses transport the children from their cottages to the park area. The Home owns an orthopedic bus for the physically handicapped and a regular school bus.

In addition to the facilities at the park, each building has at least 4 pieces of recreation equipment. That's a minimum of 152 swings, slides, meter toilets, etc. for the 36 cottages. Every piece is kept in shape by the department's own in-house maintenance men.

Other recreation areas are on the main grounds. The handball court near the Administration Building is a popular site. About twice a month in the summer patients congregate to hear live bands play country westerns and pop music.

One of the best-attended events is the dance held every Wednesday night year round. In summer the dance is on an outdoor recreation court. A portable public address system provides the music.

In cold weather the event is moved to the Woodside School gymnasium. About 250 patients attend the dance every week, Powell said. Some bring dates.

Roller skating is also popular. An old dairy barn was converted to a rink when the institution's farm disbanded in 1959. Between 70 and 80 students cluster across the tile floor 4 nights a week. Each has his own skate skates.

Winter recreation at the Home is just as much fun. There's ice fishing, basketball and volleyball games, movies, square dancing, wheel chair bowling, bingo games, and much more. A toboggan run was built near the park and there's also bobsledding and snowmobiling.

A major cold weather activity is a craft fair. Children learn to make rag-raggers, gloves, hats, dolls, dolls, birdhouses, ash trays, and dozens of other items. Many of these are sold at other times in Detroit and on the hospital grounds. The proceeds usually go into the patients' personal savings accounts.

One of the more elaborate events is the Harvest Ball held in the gymnasium every fall. Powell's staff spent 2 days decorating the gym for last year's dance. They lowered the ceiling with orange and black crepe paper and hung a

10-piece orchestra.

Seated in the hall are educable and trainable patients. The girls wear formal gowns donated by private groups and individuals. These dates bring them courage.

Powell pointed out that since everyone cannot attend, events like this are kept to a minimum. "We like to involve everyone in the activities," he said.

In addition to everything happening on the grounds, the department maintains an extensive schedule of off-campus activities.

Powell and his staff sponsor 350 field trips a year. They range in distance from downtown Lapeer to Cedar Point, Ohio. Somebody goes somewhere everyday, Powell said. About 80 patients go at once on most trips. They travel on chartered buses.

Residents choose from a list of 40 different destinations. Most frequently picked are Upland Farms in Oxford, Odessa Lake north of Lapeer, the Detroit Zoo, Seeger Park in Cassville and Tiger Beach games.

Each patient is allowed 8 trips a year. Entire buildings or sections of large buildings travel together with 2 staff members chaperoning. Decisions on destinations are made democratically by residents and staff, Powell said.

The trips are designed primarily for entertainment, not education, he said.

"When we take children to the zoo, we don't worry that they don't know a zebra from an elephant. Our job is not to teach. The trips are set up for fun, to show patients new things and to give them a change of environment. They are always learning but we don't say so. If you do this it will do that for you."

Powell emphasized that all excursions are resident financed. Taxpayers are not footing the bill for any of this entertainment.

Patients who have savings accounts or Social Security benefits pay their own fare. Those who have no money will participate through donations of the Lapeer Parents Association, a state-wide organization of families and friends of the patients. This service group insists that no child be left out because he has no money.

Operation of the entire recreation program costs roughly \$160,000 a year, Powell said. The state pays only the staff's salaries. The rest is financed by individuals and private organizations.

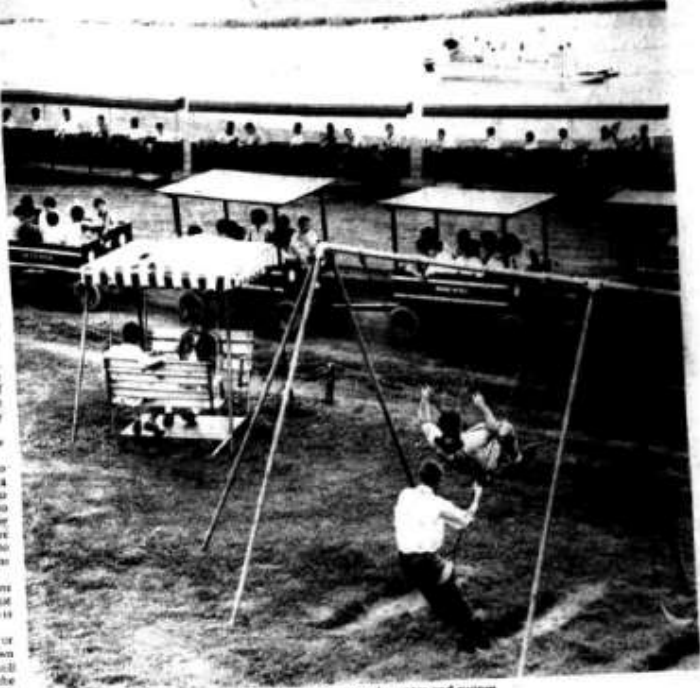
Powell gave credit for the program's success, mainly to the hospital administration and many people who have donated money to his department.

"The recreation department is as good as the administration happens to be interested in it. Ten years ago there was little interest. We had a program but it was very limited," he said.

Powell said he is indebted to the many people who have given money to the program. "You'd be surprised at the number of people who donate. They shell it out and don't even tell us how to use it," he said.

Huelga said recreation at the Home has come a long way in the past decade.

Ten years ago we used the area behind the cemetery for picnics and ballgames. Our growth has been phenomenal since then. Today I think we have 1 of the best recreation complexes in the country."



Fun: on tracks, wheels, water and swings

**75 years**  
of devoted service

We salute the Lapeer State  
Home and its devoted staff on  
the Home's 75th



County Press, August 6, 1970 (contiuned)



PAGE 8-C



THE WOMEN'S fitting room at the State Home has manning. glass showcases, a 3-way mirror and lots of pretty clothes to choose from. Helping a patient select a dress is home employee Mrs. Thelma Strom.

## Patients 'shop' for clothing at Home

Clothing, 2600 residents of the Lapeer State Home is no simple job. Ask Mrs. Loveta Hubbell, clothing department supervisor.

Before she came to the institution 25 years ago, clothing conditions were poor. A staff of eight was responsible for making, mending, and caring for all clothing worn by patients and employees.

Today, 15 persons are employed in mending, fitting, marking clothing and repairing shoes.

In 1945 much of the clothing and shoes were made in prisons at Jackson and Marquette. Women wore coarse, hard and severely underwired of undergarments. Dresses came in very unbecoming styles. If you fit in 1 of them you were lucky. If you didn't, you were a size 12. Many items ranged from knee to mid-thigh.

Men's trousers and shirts were

patched and ragged. "If a man was issued a suit and he didn't grow out of it he probably kept it 15 years," Mrs. Hubbell said.

Men's clothing was mended in a central sewing room. Women did their own. Women's dresses were made in the sewing room. So were all the shirts, pillowcases, towels, and curtains used in the institution.

Today the picture is different. Patients wear brand name clothing which fits properly.

"Patients who are able are sent to the fitting room to get their clothes. These rooms look like any store. There are glass showcases, 3-way mirrors and big racks of items to look at. Patients are allowed to choose styles they like."

Mrs. Hubbell said shirts from 2 to 32 are stocked for men. "We have

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS . . . LAPEER, MICHIGAN

underwear, girls', children's, grown-up women's and 16 men's, and are usually called for by patients and their families. The main purpose of the "store" is to give children who are unable to go downtown an opportunity to see what clothing is like and to give them the freedom to make selections, Mrs. Hubbell said.

The brand names for women include Fairchild, MacGregor and White Stag. Several shops in Lapeer carry these brands. Both men and women wear their Pajama shorts.

These clothes are provided at about 1/3 retail price, Mrs. Hubbell said. They are purchased at street clearance. Styles are usually called for by patients and their families. The main purpose of the "store" is to give children who are unable to go downtown an opportunity to see what clothing is like and to give them the freedom to make selections, Mrs. Hubbell said.

Patients There is a minimum amount of clothing allowed. However, due to storage problem. Need is determined by college supervisor.

**Lapeer State Home and Training School**  
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**Finsterwald's**  
Men's & Boys Wear  
240 W. Washington Street, Lapeer

AUGUST 6, 1970

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS... LAPEER, MICHIGAN

PAGE 7-C

# After cottage 28, patients go 'outside'

Cottage 28 is not a typical residence hall at the Lapeer State Home. There are tables, chairs and flowers on the dining table, rug on the floor and colorful bedspreads and draperies in the bedrooms. It looks almost like a rooming house.

Even less typical of the institution are the 12 patients living in the 2-story building. Although all are retarded, these patients are scheduled to be released from the Home. "28" is 1 of their last stopping places before entering the "outside."

In an effort to provide a "normal" living atmosphere for the patients, Home officials reduced the census in January from 50 to under 20 beds. 2 or 3 girls share a bedroom and all pitch in to cook meals. Each girl cares for her own room and clothing and helps with household chores.

Girls are chosen for the program during a 10-man case conference.

Various departments have representatives who meet and determine whether the ladies have the potential for placement within approximately the next 12 months," said Richard Pomer, Vocational Skills and Training Program Director.

While living in the cottage, the girls hold jobs either on or off the institution grounds. These provide training which will be beneficial after their release from the Home.

The girls also attend classes, Pomer said. During the regular school year they go to the Woodhull School. In summer a teacher holds classes in their cottage. Reading, writing and arithmetic are considered most important.

An important step toward release is obtaining a job in the community, according to Mrs. Gilda Hardy, cottage supervisor. Girls work in nursing homes, private home, laundries and facilities such as Goodwill Industries.

Despite their retardation, most of these girls are capable of living in the community without staff supervision, Home officials said.

"Being released doesn't mean people should be locked up," Pomer said. "They don't need an IQ of 100-150 to go downtown shopping and they don't have to be white kids to buy an ice cream cone."

Mrs. Hardy said a living situation as provided in cottage 28 is most helpful to girls about to enter the community. Before the program was initiated early this year, patients had difficulty adjusting to their new environment, she said.

"I worked in the laundry 8 years, ironing, sorting and folding clothes. Then they moved me to cooking training for 6 months. Then I did errands and worked in the treatment room."

Did the like the attendants in cottage 28?

"The nurses were all nice. I used to grow them a hard time but they were pretty good about it."

Bernice just at the old folks' home many times. She hopes to be discharged from the institution and begin a life of her own. When a family is formed for her to live with, Bernice says she will begin looking for a job in a hospital.

Fortunately, most patients participating in the program are either

placed in the community under State supervision or discharged completely. Those who are discharged are returned all rights and privileges enjoyed by the general population.

Employees in cottage 28 agree that the program is a success. "It's a gratifying experience. Our girls come back and tell us how well they're doing. It is real worthwhile," Mrs. Hardy said.

Pomer said plans are being made to move the program out of cottage 28 into 4 private homes on the grounds. They are now occupied by Dept. of Health and 3 staff doctors who will move to homes in the community. Pomer said he hopes the first home will be ready for occupancy this fall.



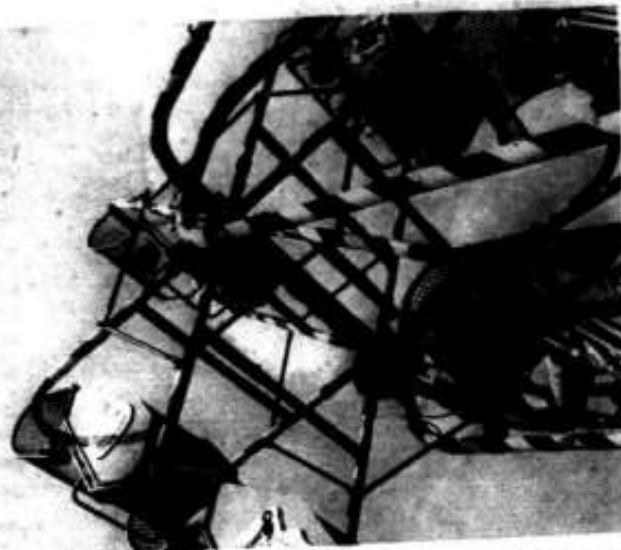
RESIDENTS OF Cottage 28 read, watch television or just relax on the bright orange rug in their comfortable living room. Most of the building's 12 residents hold jobs in the community and some are slated to be discharged.

"We'd be surprised at the apprehension they feel at going out. They know so little about the big wide world. We try to take away some of the fear by showing them what it will be like," she said.

Although the girls need social activities, they do not usually participate in the institution's recreation program, in the institution. She said she was 1 of

the first to move into cottage 28. Now working as an aide in a convalescent home, Bernice recalls life in the cottage. "It was just like home. We had freedom like on the outside. They taught us how to do things."

She said she worked at 3 different jobs in the grounds before beginning work at the convalescent home.



The Home's ferris wheel is red and white.

# Oakdale residents are working again

by NORMA GLEASON

Rachel is 37 years old, she says. She looks 22.

She has a shy, winning smile.

Rachel lives at Oakdale Center (State Home). Her life is different these days. She's studying to be a beautician. And getting paid while training.

It's part of a new program that is good news for both Oakdale residents and the institution itself.

Because under the program, residents can work again, yet be paid less than the minimum wage.

Not long ago residents at Oakdale were permitted to work around the place at whatever jobs they liked and were able to do. They received pay in the form of spendable tokens. It helped the institution and it kept residents busy and happy.

Then came the blow.

Word came from on high that residents couldn't work unless they were paid according to legal minimum wage scales.

That was last December. The Dept of Mental Health banned work by residents. The ban was a consequence of a federal court decision ordering that wage and hour laws be applied to residents of institutions.

Institutions couldn't afford to pay minimum wages, particularly when the work being done was of less-than-minimum caliber. In their 1600 residents, Oakdale had 400 of them. Residents were ordered to stop working until Michigan legislators appropriated special funds. The money, plus recent changes in Mental Health laws, now permit payment to residents who work, if the work is part of a training program.

So Rachel and some other residents are busy again.

Last week 10 residents — first to be put in training programs — were handed paychecks. It was the same day regular staff workers get paid.

Said 1 resident in happy disbelief, "You mean we get paid whenever you big shots do?"

Working residents do not get the



RACHEL (LEFT) watches beautician Sandra Havens blow-drying another Oakdale resident's hair. Rachel is learning the trade.

minimum wage. Explain Lillian Stout, who's in charge of Activities Therapies. "They are paid a percentage of the minimum hourly wage based on individual output. The percentage can range anywhere from 1% to 5% of the minimum wage. Payment over this amount falls into another category for which we are not licensed."

All 400 residents who were working before cannot be put back to work at once. They must wait until suitable training programs can be set up.

Useful programs are being developed on a grass roots level. "We are taking referrals from our staff workers," Mrs Stout said. "They know where help is needed and where a training program could be developed that would be relevant to residents yet not replace regular workers. Our staff provides us with descriptions of the prospective job and we try to plan a training program around that opportunity."

"We hope to add about 10 to 15 residents to the program each week, until all 400 are involved. The residents are glad. They are already making plans for the money they will earn," Mrs Stout said.

Rachel, the girl who's studying hair-dressing, has announced plans to save most of her money. This is not unusual, according to Brian Seiler, director of volunteer services at Oakdale. "Many residents have shown interest in putting their money into savings accounts. We have 2 here on Mainstream (Operation Mainstream) who keep out a certain amount in cash and put the rest in their account here at the institution," Seiler said.

She said Rachel is already good at shampooing and the next step will be to teach her to give permanents. "We will probably leave cutting hair until last," she said.

The ultimate goal of the training program would be for Rachel to find work out in the community.

Other job-training programs planned at the institution include domestic service, messenger service, laundry, barber shop and as ambulance attendants, Mrs Stout said.

Residents who are put on work-training programs are enrolled also in a companion program called TAC, short for Therapeutic Activities Center.

TAC deals mainly with increasing the skills of the residents in daily living and socialization. "In TAC," Mrs Stout explained, "we teach residents pre-academics, such things as money management, basic reading and writing so they can sign their checks; we give them counsel in using their leisure. We give them experiences in community living."

Oakdale's superintendent, Dr Joseph Denniston, says he is "over the top" in the law, that the new

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# Oakdale in the Newspapers

Date Unknown 1973-1979

**TIMOTHY PENN**  
Journal Lapeer Bureau  
**PEER** — In 1894 the first state for the mentally retarded was in Lapeer County, largely through the efforts of Gov. John T. Rich of Elba. A committee actually selected the site — half in Elba Twp. and half in Lapeer. Gov. Rich's behind-the-scenes maneuverings played a large

role in the final choice of the land. During the almost 80 years, there have been many changes at the state institution, but none so drastic as those that are now being implemented. Four dormitory-residences and the "castle-like" administration building on the grounds of the Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities, all built at the turn of the century, are being demolished this month.

A name change and the demolition serve as appropriate symbols of the sweeping changes at the center, known as the Lapeer State Home and Training School from 1894 to 1973. The structures have served as homes for the mentally retarded since 1899. The four stately structures were vacated by residents in June, 1972.

The castle — long a familiar landmark in the Lapeer area — was built in 1902 with the help of local farmers who suled large stones in from their fields or the walls of the building. It was vacated by administrators in November, 1972.

The covered walkway which connects the buildings being demolished once ran to several other buildings. It was listed as the longest walkway of its type in the world by Ripley's Believe It or Not.

**FOUR MORE** buildings which are still in use as dormitory-residences are scheduled for demolition soon after they are vacated next June.

All nine buildings are close to old M 21 (Davison Rd.) and are the oldest of all the buildings on the grounds. There are no plans to replace any of the buildings because they won't be needed.

While the visual changes and the name change are more apparent to the naked eye, the philosophy of care for the mentally-retarded is changing more drastically.

Population statistics are a good example.

By 1980 it is projected that there will be only 500 to 800 residents at the center, which housed more than 4,400 mentally retarded in 1956. There are now 1,900 residents at the facility.

The population dropped from the 1956 high for 10 consecutive years because similar facilities were opened around the state. The push for regionalization is continuing in an all out effort to get the residents closer and perhaps back into their own families or foster families.

In 1971 the home reached an all-time high of 500 placements of residents in locations such as foster homes, group homes or nursing homes. Since 1966

admissions have been down and placements have been up.

Placements dropped off to 250 in 1972, but are above that mark for the first nine months of this year.

**ADMISSIONS** to the center are becoming "rare" compared with years past. In 1972 only 41 new residents were admitted, along with 86 transfers from other facilities around the state.

According to Frederick J. Campbell, community relations director, there are now more options open to families with mentally and physically handicapped children. Years ago there was only one

option — a state home.

Campbell said the family situation has been proved the best for most children who are mentally retarded, especially those who do not have physical handicaps.

"Institutionalization is detrimental to these children in most cases," he said.

"Staying in their own family or being adopted by a foster family is the best situation for most of the residents who formerly came only to the Lapeer center."

"I don't want to say that institutionalization is now viewed as a last resort, but that is almost the situation. The other options open to families, in most cases, are more desirable."

Despite the projected population decline, the center is and probably will remain as the county's largest employer. There are now more than 1,400 employees and there always will be at least one employee for each patient, Campbell said.

No-layoffs are planned to keep pace with the decline in residents. Center officials are convinced normal attrition will take care of any excess employees over the years until 1980.

County Press, April 27, 1971

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS... LAPEER, MICHIGAN

## Expert is glad that State Home is shrinking

An expert on mental retardation says it's a good thing that the Lapeer State Home's ancient buildings are crumbling. He says Michigan already has too many hospital beds for the retarded.

These are the opinions of Burton Blatt, Ph.D., director of Special Education and Rehabilitation at Syracuse University. He gained fame in 1966 for his expose of mental hospitals, "Christmas in Purgatory," in Look magazine. He spoke to Lapeer State Home staff members last Thursday. His appearance here was part of an ongoing staff development program at the State Home.

Dr. Blatt believes the retarded child is entitled to as normal a life as possible. He said, "It doesn't matter what you do, it is what you do that tends to normalize the life style of the retarded child."

Dr. Blatt was especially critical of present day institutions and the methodology in which retarded are

frequently subjected, he said. "The first priority of any institution is to begin with what the institution is most comfortable with," he referred to "back wards" and they must be cleaned up. "Expenditures and staff should be quadrupled in back wards," said Dr. Blatt.

At the State Home, this would amount to more than double its present \$14 million annual budget.

Dr. Blatt said, "The truly unlucky institutions in the country are those that were recently built. The state will not allow them to be run down. Lapeer is lucky with its old buildings." He was referring to the danger of present-day institutions, which he advocates.

When asked about the Michigan Department of Mental Health's plan to build a network of small (500 bed) institutions across the state, he said, "It is a mistake. You will get too late."

The present community regional centers, partly financed by local funds. "There is only 1 in 10 of the population across the United States in institutions for the mentally retarded," he said. "You do not need any more beds than this. In Michigan, this figure is over 8,000 beds. Michigan currently has 11,000 beds and the Department of Mental Health expects to remain at the level with the building of new institutions and the depopulation of the state institutions."

One must realize that there is a difference in what you are doing at Lapeer and what you are doing at Lapeer. In other words, there is going to be disagreement. "The community must be the residents at Lapeer State Home as their children or their neighbors, children and not 'State kids' before and agreement will come."

This will be hard," Dr. Blatt warned Dr. Blatt's rapid parents' organizations.

The associations for retarded

children have been the conscience for the mentally retarded. They now have a conflict of interest which extends the children. A number of parents groups run schools and programs which are usually contrary to public policy today. If they are up the program, they give up their budget. This they will not do," he said.

There's no question that the State Home has been influenced by the type of thought represented by Dr. Blatt. It is dropping about 200 patients a year. In 1948, there were over 4,000. Today there are less than 1,000. By 1978, admissions is expected to drop to 1,500 or less. Only the most retarded patients are being admitted. The more educable are now being treated at day centers near their homes.

### WISELY SAYS:

Support the  
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APRIL 24 - 10 A  
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Insurance Agency

## Unemployment makes county eligible for aid

Lapeer County is eligible for federal aid as a high unemployment area. It will be entitled to a 50% matching grant for public works projects.

The announcement was made last Thursday by the Federal Economic Development Administration.

There's a catch, however. To get money, the county must have an overall economic development program. The county has no such program at this time.

The county qualified for a grant on the basis of 1970 public taxes. Lapeer and Lapeer counties make up the Flint

## Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, January 10, 1973

County Press, November 15, 1972

County Press, January 19, 1973

NOVEMBER 15, 1972



Abandoned "castle" slated for razing

## Drive started to save 'The Castle'

A 70-year old building on State Home grounds, slated for razing next year, may be saved.

A drive has begun to preserve the 3-story building known as "The Castle". The drive is sparked by Mrs Johanna Ostrander, a 17-year employee of the Home. She said many employees support the move to save the building. She is circulating petitions, and said anyone interested in helping can contact her at Bldg 45 at the Home.

Mrs Ostrander wants to preserve the building as a library and museum, with emphasis on the retarded and the Home's history.

"The Castle" is being vacated, according to community relations director Fred Campbell, because it is too costly to continue using as an office building. It needs repairs and renovations, Campbell said. Plans had been to use the building for some purposes until Jan 1, but to seek approval from Lansing to tear it down after that. Approval must come from Lansing because the building is owned by the state.

The old building was originally the administration building, with the upstairs part as the Superintendent's residence. But administrative offices have been moved into the hospital annex building. The annex was originally a staff residence.

"The building is quite a grand place and has a grand history," said Campbell. "It certainly is a stately building and kind of a landmark around the community."

There are 35 to 40 rooms in "The Castle", which was built in 1902.

William Jessop, president of the Lapeer County Historical Society, said the Society would be interested in helping to save the building if there were a way for them to do so.

"We are supportive of any efforts to preserve the building," Jessop said. "Many places could be saved and used by people rather than be a part of a destructive process."

## State Home name is

## ch New name e' for Home

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reflected the fact that other homes and training schools were opening in Michigan.

Resident enrollment reached its peak in 1948 with 4,216. Since then there has been a steady decline as more services for the retarded became available in the communities. The projected enrollment is for 800 to 1,000 by 1980.

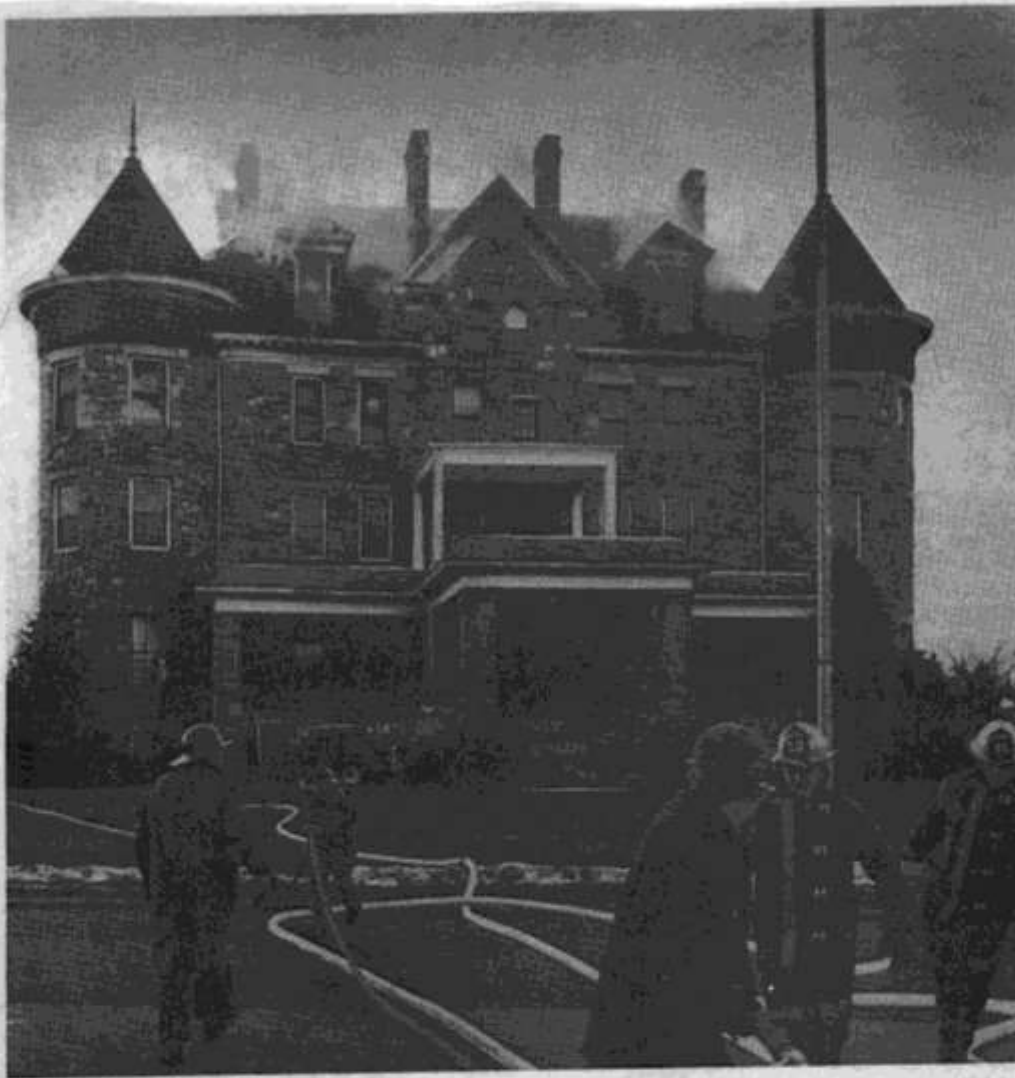
Fred Campbell, director of community relations at the Home, said the staff considered about 15 suggestions for the new name. There were finally honed down to four or five.

"Oakdale" was chosen because of the many oak trees and groves at the west end of the property near the Woodsdale School. Also because the grounds slope from west to east, suggesting a valley or "dale".

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3 FIRE DEPTS fight the blaze

## Arson is blamed for fire at 'the castle'

The 70-year-old State Home building known as "The Castle" was damaged by fire Saturday. Firemen and State Home officials say it was arson. No arrests have been made.

Fire was discovered about 4:30 p.m. by a member of the Home's safety dept. Fires had been set on the second and third floors of the 3-story building. Damage to the second floor was minor. On the third floor, the fire burned through to the attic and charred roof timbers, firemen said.

The building had been vacant about 3 weeks, according to Fred Campbell, public relations director for the Home. It is tentatively scheduled to be torn down sometime this year.

"The Castle" was built in 1902 and was formerly used as the superintendent's residence and offices. The state fire marshal had condemned the second and third floors several years ago as a fire hazard, and only the first floor and the basement had been in use. Campbell said only a few pieces of furniture remained in the building.

Firemen from Lapeer City, Elba Twp and the Home's fire dept fought the blaze for about an hour. Campbell said Monday that Home Supt Albert Meuli and engineers were trying to determine if the building had been structurally damaged. He said from preliminary observations it did not appear to be severely damaged. The Home's infirmary

is located next door.

Some Lapeer residents and State Home employees recently started a drive to save the building, one of four slated for removal. The buildings are no longer needed, and are considered too old to remodel. Organizers of the drive want to save the building as a museum of the Home's history.

Campbell said the fire definitely appeared to be arson, and 1 or 2 residents of the Home are suspected. The investigation is continuing, he said.

There are no definite plans to tear down the building, Campbell said. He said funds to raze it must be appropriated by the State legislature.

## Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, January 17, 1973

County Press, February 7, 1973

LAPEER, MICHIGAN

### State Home still needs its hospital

by NORMA GLEASON

Lapeer County General Hospital needs more room. There's a fairly new hospital building on Lapeer State Home grounds. The State Home recently named over its school (Woodside) to the Lapeer School District because Home population has so decreased.

So, any chance of Lapeer getting the hospital?

Not much.

Home residents now go to Pontiac for surgery, and operating rooms at the Home hospital are idle. But the rest of the hospital is in full use, according to Fred Campbell, community relations director.

Campbell said there are 6 wards in the hospital, with about 160 beds. But 3 of the wards, or 80 beds, are used for residents who need acute medical care (similar to that offered at Suncrest). The other 3 wards, another 80 beds, are used for residents who need Medicaid-type care (similar to that offered by nursing homes not offering skilled care).

"We expect to be using the facility for our residents for the foreseeable future," Campbell said Monday.

The state is contemplating an addition at Pontiac State Hospital for patients needing acute medical care, Campbell said. But that may be years in the future. If and when the addition is built, acute care patients from the State Home may be transferred there.

But even in that case, Campbell feels, the Home will continue to use the hospital as a resident home. Patients may be transferred there from some of the older, less comfortable buildings. If necessary, the hospital building could be remodeled for new purposes, Campbell said.

SMILE AWHILE

The penalty for bigamy is two mothers-in-law.

County Press, January 24, 1973

## 2 months later, the patient is still sick

Dear Editor:

Last Thanksgiving we informed the 'Doc,' "This child is sick and needs medical attention." What was done? New medication, X-rays ordered and close observation. Weeks later no improvement, meds discontinued.

X-rays were taken. "Definitely something there. Should be admitted to the hospital." 'Doc,' was called. New medication ordered and patient sent back to building.

2 months later, still no improvement. Stays in bed, too much pain to get up. Bed has to be padded.

Doc's native country believes in mercy killings, but what about the suffering? We want action now.

Lapeer State Home Attendants †

JANUARY 24, 1973

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS



IT TOOK ONLY A DAY to erect this new building on State Home grounds. The halves of the modular unit were quickly slid off trailers onto tracks, and then onto the foundation. The left half here is in place; a few minutes later, the right half was slid over. The building will house the State Home Credit Union. It was put up by Chesaning Erecting Service.



LAPEER COUNTY PRESS

# State Home hires barber - and gets some flack, too

For the first time, a licensed barber has been hired to cut residents' hair at the Lapeer State Home. He is Bill Owens who formerly worked at Russell's Barbershop in downtown Lapeer.

And his hiring has caused another barber to accuse the State Home of wasting taxpayers' money.

The complaining barber is Steve Slater who has a shop at 4516 N. Lapeer Rd. near Columbiaville. Slater applied for the job at the State Home but the 3-man grooming committee, which interviewed all applicants, picked Owens as most qualified.

"I was going to work for \$3.45 an hour and they are paying this other guy \$4.05. I have been a barber 25 years. I don't know why they didn't hire me and save the taxpayers some money," Slater told The Press.

Jack Frost, personnel director at the State Home, had the answer. "The grooming committee regarded Owens the

top candidate on the basis of his work and the interview. So he was hired. If Slater has been the top candidate, he could have got the top pay too," Frost said.

The grooming committee wasn't satisfied with Slater's answers to long questions regarding the cutting of long hair and the cutting of Negroes' hair.

"One of the men on the committee had long hair. He asked me why I wanted to close my shop and work for the state. I told him that long-haired guys like him were putting me out of business," Slater said.

There are many Negro residents at the Home but Slater said he'd had no experience cutting Negroes' hair.

"If I were on the grooming committee, I probably wouldn't have hired him either," Frost said.

Slater claimed 3 beauty operators at the Home were unhappy that Owens was being paid about 60 cents more per hour

than they make. He said they planned to protest.

Frost said he'd also heard the beauty operators were unhappy. He pointed out that their wages are comparable to those paid in downtown shops. But the operators downtown usually get tips from their customers. (Home pay rates are determined by state civil service.)

In the past, Home residents who didn't go to shops downtown had their hair cut by attendants who had some snipping ability but were not licensed barbers. Home officials recently decided there should be a licensed barber available on the grounds. The grooming committee was designated to hire one.

As for Slater, he isn't still trying to get the job. "I wouldn't take it now, no matter what. It wouldn't take them long to find an excuse to fire me," he said.

## North Branch man killed

SECTION 3 - PAGE 17

# State Home continues to progress by shrinking

ANNUAL PROGRESS EDITOR ... LAPEER, MICHIGAN

earlier years.

The Home has a long and rich history. It was opened in 1895. During all its early years, it functioned (more or less) as a custodial institution.

In recent years, enlightened views have wrought changes. There has been a 2 pronged attack to improve the institution. One, by a reduction in number of patients, getting as many residents as possible out into housing of their own.

In the community, too, by retrained efforts to teach and train to the utmost.

We believe that what you expect from a person is exactly what you get.

are treated as if they can, indeed, learn.

Although the number of residents at the Home has been reduced to 2,500 (from a former high of 4,216) the number of staffers remains at 1,150. The improved ratio of personnel to patients means more contacts and more training opportunities.

There were 2,700 residents at the Home a year ago when last year's Progress edition said 2,250 means that during that 12-month interval, 500 former institutionalized persons have found homes in the community, a happy event for most of them.

We are now scheduled to go down by another 500 this year," Campbell says. "Plans are that by 1980 we will have no more than 1,000 residents and perhaps fewer than that."

During 1972 alone, 4 resident buildings at the Home were emptied. Today it serves only four Lapeer, St. Clair, Lenawee and Shiawassee residents.

The other 2 counties formerly served were Oakland and Macomb. But they now have their own habilitating district, with offices in Sterling Heights. A facility to house patients from those counties is to be built near Mt. Clemens.

Important events of 1972 for the Home, Campbell says, were the retirement of Dr. A. M. Abston as superintendent after many years of service, and the taking over of that post by Albert Mehl. Highlights was the inauguration of the unit program. There are 20 such programs. Each program has at least 100 residents. The unit concept is geared to put more staff members in direct contact with residents.

"For example, instead of the social worker being off somewhere away from the residents in a social work department, he's out in a building with the residents," Campbell explained.

Still another major happening of last year was the transfer of the Woodhull School to the Lapeer Public Schools. This year will see another important change - in the name of the institution. The Home was originally called the "Michigan House for the Forfeited and Epileptic." Later it became the "Michigan Home and Training School." This was later changed to "Lapeer State Home and Training School."

On July 1 of this year, the institution will formally adopt the name "Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities." The Home is currently operating on a budget of \$16 million for the 1972-73 fiscal year.

MARCH 7, 1973

by NORMA GLEASON

For the Lapeer State Home, progress in 1973 means the continuation of dramatic changes instituted in 1972 and

## Village West, Edison, Hamady are the Big 3

In Lapeer City, the Big Three are Ford, GM and Chrysler. In Village West, Detroit Edison and Hamady Brothers. They pay more property taxes than any other businesses within the city limits.

In 1972, their combined taxes

County Press, March 28, 1973

## Myths and misconceptions

# The fence is down, but retarded remain caged

by LYNN WILSON

There are people in Lapeer County who are limited not merely by their own capabilities, but by labels and by misunderstanding. They are "special" children and adults — the mentally and physically handicapped, the emotionally disturbed and the learning disabled.

It is estimated that 12.5% of Michigan's school-age population of 3,969,000 are handicapped. Of this number, 60,232 are mentally retarded. That statement is included in a fact sheet prepared by Larry Campbell, director of special education for the Lapeer Intermediate School District.

But numbers and statistics are easy to accept. The retarded person — child or adult — sometimes finds acceptance more difficult.

"The mentally retarded learn more slowly than others, and are often what they can learn. Thus, they are children and adults with disabilities, not needs that we all have — the need for another true statement."

The fact sheet, taken in part from a pamphlet developed by the President's Committee on Mental Retardation entitled "Hello World!", will be included with each jar of jelly Lapeer Jaycees sell during Jelly Week. Proceeds from the project will go to the Lapeer Association for the Mentally Retarded, the use of the association's adult activity center.

Jelly Week is now. Tonight (Wednesday) at 7:30, the group's public focus at White House will be thought. Jelly Week would be a good time to talk with people about mental retardation, Campbell explained. And perhaps let people know that their world and the world of the mentally retarded are one and the same.

"The new pendulum swing in education is toward integration — with logic," said Campbell. "As educators we should not put a shell around the handicapped child if he can get along with and be a part of his most normal peers, then we should give him that chance."

Campbell has a double interest in Jelly Week. He's a member of the Lapeer Jaycees. And the special problem of the handicapped is his life.

Speakers at tonight's forum include Albert Meuli, Lapeer State Home superintendent. He'll speak on the institution's role in community placement. Gene Thauber, a consultant for the mentally retarded with the Dept. of Education, will talk about special education in Michigan.

Campbell will discuss what services are available for the handicapped in Lapeer County. Ron Herriman, president of the Lapeer County Assn. for the Mentally Retarded, will explain about the association and — just maybe — ask you to become involved.

And Ron Griffin, Jelly Week chairman, will tell you about the Jaycees' project.

"We hope we don't necessarily get parents of handicapped kids to come," Campbell said. "They already know."

## Dennis-Thompson vows exchanged

Mrs. Neida Thompson and Jack Dennis announce their marriage. Saturday, March 17, in Las Vegas, Nevada. They were accompanied to Las Vegas by Mr. and Mrs. Adalbert Dennis of Chicago.

The newlyweds will make their home at 6365 Baker Lane, Indianapolis.

With the Home such an integral part of Lapeer, Campbell wonders why the myths and misconceptions about the mentally retarded continue.

"I don't know why there's that big mistake about the Home," he said. "People still think there are walls surrounding the institution and its residents."

The great iron fence which once enclosed the State Home's grounds was removed years ago. Retarded and otherwise handicapped children are being identified. A state law requiring local school districts to provide special education programs and services for every handicapped person to age 25 will go into effect July 1.

"When you talk about education, you're not necessarily talking about 10 years a thousand," Campbell explained. "Not all of them are going to read."

But there are other things to learn — such as a feeling of usefulness, a sense of purpose, a certain dignity. "There's the whole thing of self concept. Who are I? Who cares about me? What can I do? We can teach social appropriateness," said Campbell. "Handicapped people can learn how to greet people. Instead of standing up to someone and throwing their arms around them to show affection, they can learn that when you meet someone you shake hands."

There are practical things to know — survival tactics if you will. How to count change, for instance. Knowledge that other kids pick up indirectly, retarded children may have to be taught in school.

"Mandatory special education lets us continue to help. It gives educators a little more time to track every child — if they need it," Campbell explained.

But when a handicapped person reaches the age of 25, he is dismissed from state supported programs. Some mentally handicapped people have been placed in foster homes. Some live with their parents.

But life and learning don't have to stop at 25. And that's where the adult activity center comes in. "Rather than tell the retarded person, 'Here's a TV. Now sit there for the rest of your life,' we want him to always have a place to go," Campbell said. "The center won't be for people who can be gainfully employed. We don't want to keep a person there if he can be trained. But if he can't, he can stay. The center will be for those with no other place to go."

There are presently 4 adults over 21 at the center. It's located at Griswold School on Peppermill Rd. The plan is to expand the activity center's services to handle 20 persons. Campbell hopes to have the center in full swing by this summer.

On behalf of the association for the retarded, Campbell has applied for a \$30,000 grant from Developmental Disabilities Services Fund. He'll know in May if the request is approved.

The \$30,000 would be used money — "just to get us going," Campbell explained. "It would be used for equipment, transportation, salaries and so on."

Campbell said he thinks there's a good chance the grant will be approved. "But if it isn't, I'm still convinced the adult activity center can be a reality," he said.

Additional funds and money to operate and maintain the center would come from various federal, state and local agencies and from private groups, Campbell said. They include the Lapeer County Mental Health Board, the United Fund, United Cerebral Palsy, Vocational Rehabilitation Service, the state Department of Social Services, and the association for retarded children.

"There are interested people to work

on the idea. We've got the need and the facility," Campbell added.

For many, the center will be the most important thing in their lives. The center's goals are outlined in the association's grant request.

"The objectives of the work activity center will be to provide opportunities that will give structure and meaning, work activities and experiences, economic benefits, develop social skills and attitudes, foster and maintain vocational and academic skills, develop useful leisure-time skills and hobbies, provide a respite for parents/caretakers, and develop community awareness and understanding of the handicapped and his needs."

"Leisure time is important," Campbell emphasized. "The activity center will have social events — dances and parties. We'll teach the men to cook so if they're by themselves, they can get along."

Retarded adults will learn that hobbies — like stamp collecting — can be fun. Maybe they'll listen to music.

And maybe they'll earn money. Campbell would eventually like the center to become a sheltered workshop where businesses could subcontract with the center to make simple parts and products. "The jobs we'd end up with are the ones nobody else wants," Campbell explained. "The sheltered workshop idea is the next step up. We'll have to apply for a wage deviation. There are social security forms and we'll need state approval."

The actual products of the center's activity will be limited — at first — to crafts items such as loomed tapestries, perhaps some Christmas ornaments, Campbell said.

But the center will produce intangible things — a feeling of accomplishment, a sense of belonging, a smile.

## State Home officials unfair to workers

Dear Editor:

We are State Home employees in complete agreement with the letter in



the April 11th issue. We feel it is very unfair for the employees who work directly with the residents 6 days straight not to be given every other weekend off to be with their families. Employees indirectly connected with the welfare of the residents are given every weekend off as well as every holiday.

Our workers feel this is very unfair too! We all work very diligently on the training and care of the residents in our building. We feel it is time we received some consideration too.

In fact, we submitted a schedule to our unit director which would give us more coverage than we have at the present time. However, our efforts were ignored. We are dismayed that the higher echelon expects us to carry out any program they may conceive, but have no interest in us whatsoever as fellow human beings who deserve some consideration too.

2 more employees

## Home officials should also work weekends

Dear Editor:

The County Press has published 2 letters in regards to the "every other weekend off" proposal by the Lapeer State Home attendants. We would like to further clarify our reasons for wanting the new schedule.

The irony of this situation is that State Home officials (official?) have stated they are not here to please the attendants. Also, if they allowed the units that want every other weekend off to have it, they may have labor relations problems with the remaining units not in the proposed working schedule. Thus, again, is the general political maneuver so often presented by the State Home to avoid satisfying attendants.

We work a 6-day week for 4 weeks consecutively, and have a 3-day weekend every 5th and 6th week. In 1 month's time we put in 2 days of overtime with no overtime pay. No other "business" is allowed to work an individual on this basis without paying overtime.

Mr Meuli, we propose that you and your executive staff work the rotating day basis as we do... give up your weekends... or agree to our proposal for the every other weekend off. You claim your chief concern is for the care of the residents. You promote progress in all areas concerning them with the exception of this one. The rotating day schedule is antiquated and requires special consideration. We have presented our proposal. Progress... remember?

Concerned employees of Bldgs 3 & 10

County Press, May 16, 1973

## Banished patient keeps walking back to Home

by DON PONIA TOWSKI

A retarded patient walked 10 miles in darkness recently, after being banished from the Lapeer State Home.

The patient had been left alone in Davison by a Home employee. He was told to return to Flint where he had been living.

Instead, the 21 year old man walked back to the Home. He arrived midnight with "blisters as big as half-dollars" and blood on his feet.

The incident was reported by an attendant. The patient requested anonymity.

Home officials said the story last Thursday. They said the case involved an effort to help the patient. The effort failed.

"We concede there may have been a collective error in judgment here," said community relations director Fred Campbell. "We're not proud of what happened."

An effort was made to find the patient after he was left in Davison. But

"We concede there may have been a collective error in judgment here. We're not proud of what happened."

he wasn't sighted, according to Campbell.

Although he lived outside the Home, the patient began returning March 5.

He had been laid off from his job in Flint. And he was apparently unhappy with the home, there in which he was placed.

The patient also returned to Lapeer on April 8 and 12, and 3 times on April

13. That was the day he was driven to Davison about 9 p.m.

An attendant told The Press.

"It was barbaric to make a kid suffer like that."

But Campbell said mental health workers were trying to help the patient become self reliant.

"The plan was that if he returned again, he could not be admitted to the

State Home. He was to be told to leave," he said.

The plan was worked out between a Home director and the Genesee County Community Mental Health Dept. It was suggested after an interview with the patient on April 17.

"Apparently, Building 40 held some magic for him. Not the Lapeer State Home, but Building 40. It was his home," said Campbell.

"I don't know how many times the patient walked that day. He may have walked or hitchhiked the first 2 times, he returned. He was taken back to Flint each time."

It was early evening the third time he came back. The staff of Building 40 was under orders not to permit him to stay. It was then he was taken to Davison and left alone.

"The person who drove him wasn't obligated to take him at all. He was really helping the guy get back on his way," said Campbell.

"I can understand why that man the attendant who reported the incident was upset. But had he been aware of the plan, he may have been a little more tolerant of what happened," he said.

The following report was written at 11:30 p.m. April 17 by the Building 40 employee.

"This boy returned for the third time this evening with both feet bleeding at the heels, apparently from walking long distances. Rules were strictly complied with concerning this boy, but with the third return hospitalization was advised."

The patient has been at the State Home since then. But he is not in Building 40.

"We're just getting him acclimated to a new building," said Campbell. That's the first step in another attempt to make him independent.

The institution has been his home for 13 years. He was sent to a foster home in Flint last spring at his request.

"I don't want to rot in here," he said at that time.



## Oakdale in the Newspapers

# After 45 years, a popular Pete retires

by LYNN MYERS

After 45 years, Friday's the day R. G. "Pete" Ruddock is retiring from the State Home.

5 days earlier, there suddenly wasn't any State Home. It is now called "Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities."

But Pete Ruddock has seen a lot of changes at the Home since 1927. His own job has changed a number of times.

"My first job was in the laundry washing clothes," he remembered.

"Then I was a fireman in the old power plant, and I worked in the warehouse for a year.

"I was a building supervisor for 10 years and general supervisor for another 10." In fact, Ruddock was the first male supervisor in a woman's building.

"Then I was executive housekeeper for about 16 years when we began to get in modern equipment. During that time the housekeeping staff increased from 7 to 152 employees. Before, the patients did almost all the cleaning," Ruddock said.

And for the last 2½ years or so, Ruddock has been in the purchasing and accounting department. "I'm now called the property manager. I'm in charge of all property on the grounds," he explained.

Ruddock is also called a great guy by just about everyone who knows him.

"I've always been interested in my job - always enjoyed working with the residents and with the employees. But I haven't worked directly with the children for awhile," he explained.



Pete Ruddock takes a final business call

Ruddock refers to Home residents as children most of the time. "When I first came here, they were called inmates. Then that was changed to patients," he said. Now, the word is residents.

Ruddock recalls that back in 1927, "there were only 2 motors on the grounds. The superintendent had an

automobile and there was 1 truck.

"We had an extensive farming operation then - 1,200 acres. And we farmed it all with horses. We were producing all our own milk with over 400 cows and we had a large flock of chickens. But pork was grown here, that's how we got rid of all our scraps.

And I'd hate to think of how many thousands of gallons of fruits and vegetables were canned," Ruddock said. "You know I don't know whether it was all that bad."

Ruddock has also seen change reflected in the faces of the Home's residents.

"I know in the past parents used to hide these kids away and forget about them. But ever since the Lapeer Parents Association was formed, they've done wonders around here. They can do things we couldn't afford or wouldn't have time to do - like pancakes for breakfast or a picnic. That's quite a treat," he said.

Ruddock's wife worked at the home too - all on for 22 years.

"I think Ruddock remembers well as the day he and his wife picked up their combined pay for the month - all of \$95. "That seemed like an awful lot of money. I told my wife then, 'you know, if we save our money in a few years maybe we can buy a small farm.' I must have still had some of the farm left in me. I didn't work out that way though. I thought we were making too much money and had my wife stop working," he laughed.

Plans for the future? "I'm just going to live day by day," Ruddock explained.

"Years ago I quit making plans too far in advance. But I hope to keep active - a little fishing, a little hunting - although the hunting will have to be limited because of my heart condition," he said.

A few years ago Ruddock had a pretty severe heart attack, although you'd never guess it now. And at 65, he's still smoking a curvy corn-cob pipe. "I haven't been able to give it up yet," he admits.

Ruddock will also stay on as treasurer of the local credit union, a position he's held for 18 years.

Conscientious to the end, Ruddock split his Press interview into 2 parts because he had a 9:30 appointment with Supl. Albert Meuli for coffee. "And I don't want to be late," he explained.

It turned out to be more than coffee. Rosemary Halpin baked a cake. "I'd have to say it was the best cake I ever had. It was delicious," he offered. "And I'm not a cake man."

Just a fine man.

## Jail a fun place? Ex-sheriff says no

State Representative Quincy Hoffman (R-Applegate) calls proposed jail rules and regulations submitted by the State Department of Corrections "ridiculous." As a member of the Administrative Rules Committee, he promised "to take

The former Sanilac County Sheriff said he is convinced that all of this is idealistic, probably suggested by psychiatrists or counselors and outside penal experts who feel jail should be a fun place.

There have been no public hearings and these rules have not as yet been considered by the Administrative Rules Committee.

"I would urge local officials involved



## Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, July 4, 1973

### Fireworks at State Home

A gala fireworks display will be held at the Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities (formerly Lapeer State Home) July 4. The public is invited to enjoy the show which is put on for the residents.

The event will start at about 9:30 p.m. and last 30 to 45 minutes. Drivers are asked to be extra careful as pedestrian traffic is expected to be heavy.

Parking spaces will be hard to find on Home grounds. A field used in previous years has been leased to a farmer and can't be used this year. Drivers are asked to park on the north side of the railroad tracks, or to watch the fireworks from outside the grounds. You can get a good view from the Yankee-Hamady shopping center.

In case of rain the show will be July 5.

County Press, June 27, 1973

## Oakdale what? Oh, that's the State Home

What is involved in changing a name? "Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities," (formerly Lapeer State Home & Training School) becomes effective July 1, according to Albert Meuli, superintendent.

The name change, along with name changes for 7 other mental health

institutions, were approved by the legislature.

The basis for the change is that the terminology "home and training school" no longer reflects the basic role of the institution, according to Meuli.

The word "Oakdale" is derived from the many oak trees and the slope of the surrounding landscape. The word "center" points out that the institution is a regional center, serving Genesee,

Lapeer, Shiawassee and St. Clair Counties.

"It does not imply life in a residence nor does it imply we are a school," Meuli said.

"Developmental disabilities" is a rather new concept used to describe a group of related handicapping conditions. Included are such conditions as mental retardation, deafness, blindness, epilepsy, cerebral palsy and neurologic disorders. A developmental disability is a chronic substantial handicap, usually acquired during early childhood, which impairs the normal growth and development of an individual.

Meuli said, "The primary developmental disability of residents at the Oakdale Center is mental

retardation, however, many residents have multiple handicaps involving one or more of the other disabilities as well."

Oakdale Center currently has an enrollment of 2,075 residents ranging in age from 1 year to 95. This is a drop in enrollment from 4,400 in 1956. Projected enrollment, according to Meuli, is 800 to 1,000 by 1980.

As Michigan's first residential institution for the mentally retarded in 1895, it was known as The Michigan Home for the Feeble-minded and Epileptic. In 1913, Caro State Hospital

opened to care for Michigan's epileptics. At that time the name of the facility at Lapeer was changed to the Michigan Home and Training School. In 1937 the second Michigan residential facility for the mentally retarded was opened at Coldwater. This called for the name change to Lapeer State Home and Training School.

Local group  
will sing at  
MSU program

Swimmer  
drowns

6-year-old

Pair charged  
with damage  
at drive-in

County Press, July 18, 1973

## Probation Council works

# Kids get help, not jail; the helpers get kissed

by NORMA GLEASON

Why did Nancy Jean get into trouble? Arrested at 17. Possession of marijuana. A night in jail. Shocked parents.

A school dropout. That's Nancy Jean. In had company. She was arrested with another girl and 2 boys.

But why?

It's the answer to the "why" that volunteers with the Citizens Probation Council seek. For Nancy Jean, for John, for Barb, for dozens of young people and some older ones. People who have had a brush with the law.

Shoplifters. Car thieves. Juvenile offenders. Delinquents with malicious destruction. Truants and entering.

Although most of the individuals referred to the Probation Council are in the 15-25 age bracket, some are in their 40's and 50's.

Like Nancy Jean, most of those referred to the council are first time offenders charged with relatively minor crimes. People arrested for crimes of violence or sex or hard drugs are excluded from the program.

Nancy Jean, the arresting officer told the prosecutor, didn't seem like a bad kid. She had no previous police record. She might be a good candidate for the Citizens Probation Council.

The prosecutor agreed. He referred the case to the council. They agreed to accept Nancy Jean as a probationer, and Nancy Jean agreed to accept counseling.

By doing so, Nancy Jean escaped prosecution, and earned a chance to have the arrest expunged from her record.

The counselor assigned to Nancy Jean was a cheerful, friendly middle-aged woman. We'll call her Mrs. Mention, not her real name.

It was not by accident that Mrs. Mention was chosen as Nancy Jean's counselor. Not because of structuring of the organization. Each counselor must work with a number of clients.

No, it was because, in the view of the council, Mrs. Mention was the person most suited to Nancy Jean's own needs.

Like all Citizens Probation Council counselors, Mrs. Mention receives no pay. These volunteer workers like people. They want to help people. Or they wouldn't be doing what they are.

But beyond that, there must be a good personal relationship between probationer and counselor. Sometimes a new counselor must be recruited to the program to serve a particular client.

"If there's not a working rapport between them, there's not a whole lot that can be done," says Dick Posner, chairman of the council.

Nancy Jean got along well with Mrs. Mention.

Here is what Mrs. Mention wrote in her monthly report to the Probation Council coordinator: "Nancy Jean's attitude in my contacts with her has been generally realistic and positive. She does have some self-doubt. She needs help in realizing her own worth. She now attends summer school and is making plans to graduate."

Since the Citizens Probation Council was set up here, 10 years ago, 164 individuals have been referred to them for help.

Of these 164, 111 were accepted for probation and 88 successfully completed it. That means 88 police records have been expunged. "disappeared into thin air."

"One of my clients was able to get



RIGHT NOW she's in court, and in despair. But, thanks to the Probation Council, things can get brighter.

month. Counselors report to the coordinator monthly on their progress with the probationer.

The probation agreement runs for a year. Theoretically, at the end of that time the relationship between probationer and counselor is terminated and the police record is erased.

It doesn't always work out that way. Says Mrs. Hadley, "Sometimes it's hard for clients to give up their counselors. It's just as difficult for counselors to let clients go. They just keep right on helping."

One counselor got so involved in her probationer that she lent him money to get started in business.

Clients don't always say "Thank you" in words. But in their behavior, in their response, and sometimes in deeds they show their counselors that they like them and appreciate their help.

"I got payola once. A client brought me an 85 lb. watermelon from the South," says Mrs. Hadley.

Mrs. Smith can top that. "I got kissed right on Main St. I think that's great."

Counselors find that often people's troubles stem from low self-esteem. "This is sometimes the reason young people try to be tough big shots," says MacKenzie. "They feel it bolsters their image in the eyes of their friends."

There are friends who are often a stumbling block in the probation program. As probationers, they may not associate with lawbreakers. This sometimes means giving up most of their friends," says Posner. "That's not easy."

Clients are charged \$75 to enroll in the program, if they are found acceptable. This is much less than court costs and fines would come to. It gives the client the dignity of paying for the service. And the money helps defray the costs of running the operation.

Council officials say there are 2 commutary needs. One is for halfway houses. Places where clients can get more and board for so much a week, not too much. Apartments are expensive these days. Home doesn't always work out.

The second need is for jobs for probationers. "Quite often we can get a job for a client," Posner says. "We have a number of counselors and volunteer workers. Among them they have a wide circle of acquaintances. One may say, 'I know somebody who might hire John.'"

But it isn't always possible to find such jobs, and officials of the council wish employers would realize that if any problems occur, the council will intervene. "They can always call on the client's counselor to straighten things out," Mrs. Hadley pointed out.

A byproduct of the council is that it saves taxpayers money because cases aren't prosecuted and don't go to court if the defendants are accepted by the council for probation.

For the council itself, the biggest current need is for more counselors. Volunteers find their help brings its own rewards.

"This is a program with a heart," is the way Mrs. Hadley describes it.

"One of my clients was able to get into the Military Police when he went into the service," says coordinator Mrs. Helena Smith. "They will not accept anyone with a police record for Military Police. But my client didn't have a record. It had been erased."

Here's how the council is organized. Chairman is Dick Posner, program director at Oakdale Center (State Home).

Coordinator is Alice MacKenzie. He is liaison between area chairmen and the prosecutor.

An executive committee runs the operation. Members, besides Posner and MacKenzie, are Mrs. Alma Hadley, Mrs. Helena Smith, Jack Frost, Alan Bradley, James Johnson, Jim Beltz, Mrs. Virginia Ortiz, Dennis Helfer, Edward Kiepps, Paul Bush, Angel Qjeda and John Ayre. Martin Clements, county prosecutor, is the group's director.

The Probation Council has an office at 300 W. Genesee.

Counselors and case workers work with probationers, mostly on a 1 to 1 basis.

More volunteer counselors are needed, particularly in the Dryden and Almont areas, say council officials. Anyone interested may phone the council office at 664-9581.

Counselors receive training at no cost. No professional experience is necessary.

They meet with their probationers about 1 hour a week or 4 hours per

## Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, August 8, 1973

AUGUST 8, 1973

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS . . . LAPEER, MICHIGAN



You volunteers are appreciated, says Joan Roberts of county general

# Hospitals thank teenagers

66 teenagers took a well-earned bow July 31. They were saluted for being volunteer workers in 4 area hospitals.

The youngsters, part of the Red Cross volunteer program, received caps, pins and certificates at a ceremony in White Junior High auditorium. They were warmly thanked by representatives from the hospitals. Lapeer County General, Suncrest, Almont and Oakdale Center (State Home).

Joan Roberts spoke for County General, Gloria Sumner for Oakdale, Sinclair Gould for Suncrest and Ruth Patten for Almont. Assisting in the presentations were Joan Gentilly of County General, Edna Lindsay of

Oakdale, Judy Stewart of Suncrest, and Randa Widdows of Almont.

Newton Davis, administrator of County General, was master of ceremony. The Rev. Hubert Rhymes gave the invocation and benediction. The prelude was by Steve Swayze.

The youngsters honored were:

Alice Anderson, Robin Avery, Darrell Beebe, Nancy Bissett, Karlyn Buckles, Kathy Candela, Sandy Carey, Carol Cobb, Sylvia Contreras, Diane Cronin, Cheryl Currier, Tammye Curless, Ramona DeFelice, Ellen Dellai, Belinda DeVine, Mari Elliott, Lori Farver, Cindy Fulton, Debra Garman, Christine Geptrey, Marcia Gilbert, Lois Grimsley, Janice Hall, Jeanne Hall, Barbara

Hartwig, Cindy Hess, Jacqueline Hillman, Doris Hoffens, Suzanne Holden, Vickie Hutchins, Denise Jochem, Frank Kalanquim, Michael Katterman, Joy Kile, Roxanne Krumenaker, Arlene Lake, Marilyn Laney, Carey Mapley, Marylou Northrop, Deborah Owen, Robin Parker, Judy Pasternak, Diana Perez, Shirley Quick.

Terry Rathka, Michelle Reynolds, Robin Roberts, Carol Root, Michele Ross, Susanne Schlaud, Regina Schriber, Debra Smith, Justine Spanke, Gene Swihart, Mary Swish, Julie Sykes, Karen Taylor, Sally Thayer, Lori Thompson, Cindy Thurman, Lynn Trumbly, Judith Vincent, Laura Weid.

Sherrie White, Janice Wild and Kathleen Willey.



# Union angered by cut in State Home budget

by DON PONIATOWSKI

A \$250,000 budget cut at Oakdale Center (Lapeer State Home) has angered union officials.

They claim the reduction has thwarted plans to hire 18 workers.

The cut stems from a recent directive by Gov William Milliken. He ordered all state departments to reduce spending by about 2%.

"At a time when the staffing among attendants and domestic service employees is inadequate, the governor's proposed cut will hit hardest at these lower levels," said Tom Chulak, staff representative of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The union represents most workers at the home.

Of the \$250,000 reduction, \$170,000 will be taken from salaries and wages, according to Chulak.

"This means the institution will have to operate with about 18 less positions than previously planned," he said Friday.

The home had planned to hire 25 persons to replace workers who had quit or retired. Because of the budget cut, only seven will be hired, according to community relations director Fred Campbell.

"It's no secret we're disappointed with the budget cut. We have lots of things here we'd like to do, but can't do now," he said.

The institution has about 980 workers in its unit program area. Included are about 200 domestic service employees. As of Aug. 26, there were 1,900 patients.

To comply with the governor's order, the home also will reduce spending on equipment, maintenance and the employees' retirement fund.

The reduction was also criticized by Harry Powers, president of state home Local 567.

"It is hard for us, as working people, to understand how the governor can push so hard to achieve tax cuts of \$155 million for next year, and then turn around and cut funds appropriated by the legislature to serve the people. Not only do we as state employees suffer, but the services we can render are diminished," he said.

"We believe that the people of the state, and the employees and residents of

Oakdale Center deserve a full range of top quality services. But they can't have them if the governor can play politics at will with the state budget," said Powers.

Chulak was also critical of a 3.8% pay raise recently granted civil service employees, including State Home workers.

"The governor has already imposed one across the board budget saving this year by forcing through the Civil Service Commission a totally inadequate 3.8% pay raise for state employees.

afternoon when he was hit by a train at a crossing on Oakdale grounds.

Saro Fasulo, a resident of Cottage 7, ran directly into the front engine of a westbound Grand Trunk Western train, police said. The train was going about 50 mph.

Engineer Richard Hempton, 57, of Battle Creek, told police he noticed the signal bells and lights were working at the crossing, then saw a man on the

"That slight increase in pay failed to cover inflationary price increases in such areas as food, clothing, and transportation," he said.

"The governor's recommended cut is not sacred. His efforts to impose his will, and his alone, on the people by ordering spending reductions is an outstanding example of why the nation is suffering from a general loss of respect for government," said Chulak.

The State Home was appropriated \$16,556,000 for 1973-74.

## 3 more arrested in drug crackdown

by LYNN MYERS

Police have arrested 3 more persons in their crackdown on alleged drug dealers.

They are Danny Watz, 21, of 1472 Daley Rd., Lapeer, Danny Miller, 25, of 371 Turill Ave., Lapeer, and Robert White, 18, of 242 Howard St., Lapeer.

They have been charged with delivery of (selling) narcotics.

Arrest warrants were authorized Aug. 24, but the three could not be located. 14 others were arrested on felony charges that weekend—most of them during a coordinated series of narcotics raids Friday night and early Saturday morning.

The arrests are the result of a 6-month investigation by a police

All but one of those arrested in the crackdown have been charged with selling either phenylcyclidine or LSD. If convicted, they face a 7-year prison term and \$5,000 fine.

1 man—James Wiczorek, 20, of Port Huron—was charged with selling morphine. Maximum penalty is 20 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine.

The intelligence unit was formed with federal financial assistance through the prosecutor's office. Its goal was to arrest dealers who, in some cases, have been selling hard drugs such as heroin.

The undercover agent has not been identified, but he'll have to step forward when cases are tried this fall. Because selling drugs is a felony, the trials will be in circuit court.

Prosecutor Clements said last week he thinks the trials will be swift because, in most cases, there are only 2 or 3 witnesses.

Both Clements and Fischhaber were pleased with the unit's work but feel much more needs to be done. "We haven't even scratched the surface yet," Fischhaber said recently.

## 2 are manhandled

# Oakdale residents attend Lapeer High

by NORMA GLEASON

This year 27 Oakdale (State Home) residents, mostly teenagers, are being bused to Lapeer Senior High School daily.

This is something new. Although last year 2 Home youngsters did attend public school, there has not been widespread busing from Oakdale to public school before.

According to Fred Campbell, community relations director at Oakdale, some youngsters are bused to the upper grades (morning) shift and others to the 9th and 10th grades (afternoon) shift.

The youngsters are based in a Type A (special education) room, where they get individual help as needed. But they are also integrated into some regular classes. These range from woodworking and gym to typing and biology.

Campbell said the Oakdale youngsters have been well accepted in the public school classes.

"Our staff has been quite sensitive to that. But our people say the teachers have been kind to them and that many students have reached out to help them. These are quite likely the more socially mature students. We are pleased about this because acceptance is one of the big needs our people have.

"We are pleased with the administration at the high school in promoting the dignity of our students," Campbell said.

"One of the things we saw right off was that the children wanted to participate in everything fully. The girls, for instance, looked at the public school girls and came back saying they wanted shoulder purses.

"Some boys are very much interested in varsity sports, like basketball. The youngsters want to go to school dances. They enjoy homework assignments. In other words, they want to be full

participating students," he said.

"The students who go to Lapeer High are those that sort of fit into the community. We're going to bus them to games and let them walk home. These are students who can handle that type of responsibility. They are the more able of our residents."

Campbell said the reason these youngsters have not been placed out into the community is because there is no place for them to go. "It's not as easy as

one thinks, to find homes for teenagers," he said. "People back off from this age group."

Campbell said there is 1 Oakdale resident attending Lapeer Junior High and 127 going to Woodside, the public elementary school on Oakdale grounds.

Both Campbell and Ron Warner, Lapeer assistant superintendent, said they had heard no complaints about the treatment of Oakdale students by the other students.



# Suit seeks 'full rights' for mentally retarded

by NORMA GLEASON

Louise is 34 and pretty. She can read a little. Write a little. She can tell time when the clock is on the hour, sometimes on the half hour.

She can understand instructions and follow them fairly well. But Louise could never, never function on her own, without supervision. So says Mrs. R. V. Pickens of Columbiaville, who cares for Louise and 4 other ex-Oakdale (State Home) patients in her home.

"If these girls were let go on their own, I would worry constantly," says Mrs. Pickens. "I don't have any girl here that I feel would be eligible to leave and manage well by herself. There isn't one of these girls that I dare leave alone."

Yet a lawsuit now in Oakland County Probate Court seeks to restore "full rights" to ex-Oakdale patients now on convalescent leave. "Convalescent leave" means the patients are allowed to leave the institution and live in an approved family-care home under supervision.

There are 96 ex-mental patients on convalescent leave in Lapeer County, and 3,600 throughout the state.

Restoration of full rights to these people would mean they would be on their own. The institution would have no responsibility toward them. Neither would their former caretakers, the home operators.

Another home operator says candidly, "These girls are going to need continued help and guidance."

An attorney and a group of social workers are behind the Oakland County lawsuit. The attorney, Gabe Kaimowitz, started petitions to restore full rights to

mentally retarded adults, on the premise that they should have the right to decide their own future.

The petitions filed in Oakland asked probate court to restore "soundness of mind" to 12 residents of a Pontiac care home. All 12 are on convalescent leave from Oakdale here.

Fred Campbell, community relations director at Oakdale, explained that when a patient leaves the institution to be placed in a home on convalescent leave, he is not at that time officially discharged. "The individual's commitment order is still in force. We pay for board and room to the home, and the individual still has the protection of the institution behind him, to help him make adjustments to the new way of life."

"The legal procedure when a judge commits an individual to a mental institution is to pronounce him not of sound mind. If he recovers and goes home, the court restores 'soundness of mind.'"

But, Campbell pointed out, there is a difference between soundness of mind and competency. "A sincere judge would certainly take that into consideration," Campbell said. "It would be irresponsible of any of us to assume that all retarded people can function with no degree of help."

"We agree that no individual should have unnecessary restrictions placed on him. But we would be opposed to mass restoration of mind. . . . What's good for you may not be good for me."

Campbell said mass restoration of mind would wipe out the family care program. The Home is against that. "We

believe an individual needs time to adjust to society. It might be too early to just shove them out the gate now," he said.

The test case in the Oakland County Probate Court is being heard by Judge Donald Adams.

Of the 12 residents on convalescent status named in the petition, eight have already been granted restoration of soundness of mind. But Judge Adams has refused to grant mass restoration to all 12. All 12 have lived at a halfway house in Pontiac, known as Chamberlain House.

One of the eight restored by the court is now living in his own apartment. He has no job and he cannot read or write. His sister says she is worried about him. He received checks from Social Security and Aid to the Disabled. But, his sister says, he had \$30 food money which he spent on other things.

In the final analysis, Campbell said, Oakdale Center is without authority in this situation. "Any determination of competence at the time of admission or of discharge can only be made by the courts," he said.

# Nonprofit publishing firm is Lapeer man's hobby

By JUDY V. SAMELSON  
Journal Lapeer Bureau

LAPEER — Spreading peace and brotherhood throughout the world has become a "personal cause" for Srinivas Bhattacharya.

It has become so important that he has founded his own medium to do just that, and he has become a publisher.

Bhattacharya is better known as "Dr. B" to his friends and colleagues at the Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities. He is a psychologist there.

He is also a professor of education at the University of Michigan and an inventor. (He has master's and doctorate degrees from London University.)

All of which add up to a busy schedule.

But Dr. B. professes to have an even more pressing "hobby of sorts." He has formed his own nonprofit publishing firm, Liberty Publications, for writers who wish to publish their works on modern-day social issues.

"The purpose is to make these works available to the public," he said. "It is a very humble operation."

The firm has been in existence for one year, and three books bear its trademark.

One of his biggest handicaps is that most of the work to prepare the manuscripts is done in the basement of Bhattacharya's home, 1304 First.

When he founded the firm, he was living on Liberty St. and if that "strikes a bell," he quips, the street was one of several reasons the firm is named "Liberty Publications."

But the word liberty has another and deeper meaning for Dr. B.

"Liberation means free from bondage," he said. "This is free from the bondage of confirming what you say or feel in these works and free from the sophisticated publishing firms that aren't 'free' at all."

A sophisticated publishing firm, Bhattacharya claims, is the middleman which reaps the rewards of publishing a

successful book.

It ends up costing the author to publish his works, he claims. "They are not publishing for the public interest. They don't want to take a chance."

Money matters plague Dr. B.

"I'm not running this for profit by any means," he said. "I've almost realized the cost of the three books that are published."

But Dr. B. says he won't give up the venture because educating the public is his aim, not making a profit.

"It is more important for people to have a vehicle to express their views on these pressing social issues," he said. "By this method, not only do we educate people but we prompt discussion, and eventually, awareness."

Bhattacharya and a few colleagues are able to do almost all the work involved in the publishing enterprise at his home.

As much as he dislikes that "middleman," Dr. B. admits there comes a stage where you simply have to use him and for "Liberty Publications" that is the printing stage. All printing and binding of the finished product is handled by a firm.

The publishing firm plans to stick with paperbacks for a while since they are less expensive. It tentatively plans to publish a monthly journal.

As an author, Bhattacharya's name is on at least 20 books printed professionally, he said. He spent 20 years teaching in European universities before coming to Lapeer five years ago.

He contends that war is fostered in the mind and that attitudes can change the present course of life if only "the heart will rule the head."

This philosophy is illustrated in his book "Peace and War," which was published by his firm. Another of his books, "A Child Grows," is being used by several psychology classes at Western Michigan University.

Perhaps Bhattacharya's favorite of the publications is "Green and Gold," which is his book of poems "dedicated in the cause of peace and love," he said.

Other publications are being planned.

Dr. B. admits that circulation of the books is a problem, but he says his best "salesmen" are colleagues both at the University of Michigan and the Oakdale Center.

He is using a Lansing distributor to market the books and has a few placed

for out-of-state distribution, he said. Bhattacharya is hoping to open branches of "Liberty Publications" in India and London when he leaves for an extended European trip this month.

A native of India, he says his greatest ambition is to use the firm to help combat "the excessively high illiteracy rate in India."



Bhattacharya works on a manuscript in the basement of his home.

## Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, October 31, 1973



### *Buildings razed at State Home*

THERE'S LOTS OF excitement for Oakdale Center (State Home) residents these days as ancient, abandoned buildings are razed. 4 dormitories, built around 70 years ago, have been torn down during recent weeks. They stood near the entrance, on the east side of the street. Next to go will be "The Castle" — the former administration building built in 1902 and vacated last November. 4 more dormitories are scheduled for demolition when they are vacated next June.

None of the 9 buildings will be replaced. They aren't needed as

the Home population continues to drop. There were 4,400 patients in 1956. There are now 1,900. By 1980, there will be only 500 to 800 as the mentally retarded are moved from large institutions "back into the community." This means they live with their families, in foster homes, group homes or nursing homes.

Despite the drop in patients, the Home continues to be the county's largest employer with more than 1,400 employees. No layoffs are expected. 10/73 †

## Oakdale in the Newspapers



### *That's the way the castle crumbles*

11/73

A bulldozer tugs on cable and a 71-year-old landmark falls at Oakdale Center (State Home). "The Castle" was the administration building. It was vacated last November. Along with 8 other old buildings, it is no longer needed as the Home population continues to shrink (from 4,400 patients in 1956 to 1,900 today).

County Press, December 19, 1973

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS . . . LAPEER, MICHIGAN

## Working mothers bring cheer to Oakdale

The Chapel of the Angels, a new building planned for Oakdale Center (State Home), may be close to reality soon.

Sponsor of the proposed chapel, the Lapeer State Home and Training School Chapel Fund, Inc., is a non-profit organization set up for the purpose of getting funds for the building of the \$120,000 circular building.

Giving a boost to the project, the Lambda chapter of Beta Sigma Phi gave a cash donation to the fund at a Christmas party Friday at Oakdale.

About \$11,000 has been raised toward the project, with \$89,000 still to go.

A telethon to raise money for the chapel is to be held Dec. 17 to 21 at the Dort Mall in Flint. It will be from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. nightly on cable TV, channel 3.

Members of the community are urged to call in a pledge during the telethon.

The Lambda group has "adopted" 20 youngsters at Oakdale. They received individual gifts at the Dec. 14 party. Gifts were also presented for the girls' and boys' cottages.

Beta Sigma Phi is an international organization with over 2,000 chapters of working mothers. The Lambda chapter presently has 11 members representing 5 cities. June Longworth of 3392 Hunt Rd., Lapeer, is president. The group's motto is "Service, self improvement, social caring, understanding and sharing."

The Chapel of the Angels, if it becomes a reality, will be a 100-ft diameter circular building with 10 classrooms and a chapel seating 75. It will be all ground floor to accommodate the physically handicapped.

The former chapel on Oakdale grounds was destroyed by fire in 1938. It was never rebuilt.

Since then, religious services have been held in various places where space was available.



CENTURY-OLD birthday girl Elsie Case chats with her best friend George Severn.

## 100-year-old Elsie's favorite at Oakdale

by HANK SCHALLER

Elsie Case knows Oakdale Center better than anyone.

Miss Case is the last link with the days when the Michigan Home for the Feeble-minded and Epileptic was opened.

Yellowed Oakdale Center records show that she was admitted March 5, 1896. Elsie was 19 at the time. The Home opened in 1895.

This Wednesday was a big day for Elsie and all those who know her at Oakdale. Elsie Case is 100 years old.

Not that the old gal is about to admit her age.

"I'm just sweet 16 and never been kissed," she tells her best friend George Severn.

Of course Severn has a peck on the cheek for Miss Case which suits her just fine. Severn is the chief x-ray technician at the Oakdale Center hospital.

"I can still remember the first time I met Elsie," he says. "She came in for a chest x-ray and said she wasn't going to take her dress off for anyone."

"So, I took the x-rays with her dress on," Severn explains.

Ever since that time Miss Elsie and Severn have been best friends.

Even on days when Elsie isn't feeling

well the sound of Severn's voice is the best medicine there is.

"She's just a perfect lady in my eyes," he claims. "A perfect lady, grandmother and mother."

These days Elsie Case is confined to a hospital bed after breaking both her hips the past couple years.

And even though Elsie lost her eyesight years ago, she knits nearly every day.

"She knits an awful lot," says nursing supervisor Doris Stephen. "When she misses a few loops she'll tear it out and accuse someone else of doing it."

But Elsie Case wouldn't hurt a fly.

Nothing pleases her more than having a baby lie in bed with her.

"She sits there, holds its hand and just mothers it," claims nurse Sharon Hazel.

It doesn't take much to please Elsie either.

She wants her glasses when she knits, chocolates when she snacks and fresh flowers to smell when she gets the chance.

Lapeer residents may know Elsie Case. She spent much of her time working as a housekeeper in the community.

Even today Elsie can't stand being untidy.

"She wants her hair just so and is never seen without a nightgown with a hanky pinned on," Mrs. Stephen claims.

Elsie isn't up to a lot of partying right now.

Even so, birthday greetings have already started coming in.

The first to arrive were from President Jimmy Carter and Gov. William Milliken. Not many persons can claim that.

Meanwhile, Oakdale hospital employees planned a tea and birthday cake to celebrate the occasion.

Nowadays when Elsie feels like it she reminisces about the days when Oakdale had 2 cottages and far less than the 1200 residents it now has.

Elsie Case was the 168th person admitted to the State Home.

But she'll always be Number 1 to many people there.

## Riverside Center "super" Reveals Lapeer Transfer

*Ionia Daily Sentinel 4-15-76*

A letter of "good-bye" was included in state paychecks distributed to Ionia Riverside Center employees today, after Dr. David Ethridge, Riverside superintendent learned he was being transferred to Lapeer.

In his letter Dr. Ethridge wrote:

"It will not be easy for me to leave Riverside Center. I have been well pleased by our accomplishments over the past two years — and in fact, I had looked forward to even greater accomplishments for the hospital, had not the Corrections transfer been made. Your outstanding effort during the extended period of unrest and uncertainty has captured the respect of the Department, the community, and, most importantly, our patients. I have shared in the morale-killing effect of the extended period but have been bolstered by your devoted concern for our patients in spite of personal anxiety and apprehension. Although my tenure here has been short in length, I consider it a unique opportunity for me to have served as your Director and to have experienced at first-hand this "island of excellence."

However, he was non-committal about a possible replacement, but points out that announcement may be forthcoming from the Department of Mental Health in Lansing, "possibly today."

The departure of the mental institution superintendent has been brought about by negotiations to transfer the current institution to the Michigan department of corrections to increase the necessary facilities for housing criminals.

The large influx of prisoners are overcrowding current facilities, not only at Michigan reformatory and Michigan training unit, (both in Ionia) but at other correction facilities in lower Michigan.

The letter also reminds employees that it was nearly a year ago the transfer plan was announced, and for the past six months, Riverside employees have had to live in an atmosphere of uncertainty regarding future employment.

"Various deadlines have come and gone," Dr. Ethridge wrote, "and I have tried to share any information made available."

Contrary to recent accounts the state budget department continues to investigate another site for Riverside Center. The legislature has also supported the retention of the present operation until alternatives are arranged, the center superintendent points out.

He reiterated that two Lansing sites are under consideration: Provincial House in downtown Lansing and Jarvis Acres in the Holt-Dimondale area.

"There is one decision, however," wrote Dr. Ethridge, "which has been finalized and which I would like to share with you."

"It is to be announced by the department of mental health," added Dr. Ethridge, "that my re-assignment as director of Oakdale Center for developmental disabilities in Lapeer is effective May 1."

Ethridge came to Ionia's Riverside Center about two years ago October, as the first non-medical superintendent of a mentally ill facility in Michigan.

His doctorate degree in philosophy was conferred by Michigan State university in 1974.

He has a long list of activities in mental health rehabilitation since earning his BS degree from Western Michigan university in 1968.

(See story inside regarding shifts in Lansing which may affect Riverside Center and a move to house elderly persons in a Lansing hotel.)

1976, Date and paper not known.  
(Probably, the County Press)



## Oakdale in the Newspapers

The Daily News and Belding Banner, April 20, 1976

THE DAILY NEWS  
AND  
BELDING BANNER  
4-20-76

### Ethridge gets post

LANSING (AP) — David Ethridge has been named director of Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities at Lapeer, the Michigan Department of Mental Health announced Monday.

Ethridge, currently director of Riverside Center at Ionia, succeeds Dr. Joseph Denniston, who is resigning May 3.

THE STATE JOURNAL  
5-11-1976

### New mental unit chief

IONIA — Dr. David Ethridge, director of Riverside Center at Ionia, has been appointed director of Oakdale Center at Lapeer.

One of 10 State Mental Health Department centers for the mentally retarded, Oakdale has 1,500 residents and about 1,200 employees.

Ethridge has been director of Riverside Center since October 1974. It is being converted into a prison.

Lapeer County Press, April 21, 1976

# New Oakdale director takes over May 3

*Lapeer County Press*  
4-21-76

David Ethridge, PhD, has been named director of Oakdale Center (state home). Donald Smith, state mental health dept director, made the announcement.

Dr Ethridge's appointment is effective Monday, May 3, the date Joseph Denniston, Oakdale director since 1974, has announced he is resigning for "personal health reasons."

Oakdale in Lapeer is one of 10 state centers for the mentally retarded. It has 1,500 residents and approximately 1,200 employees.

Dr Ethridge has been director of Riverside Center in Ionia since October, 1974. He was chief of the mental health dept's Bureau of Operational Planning (1970-1974) and has been an administrator of mental health programs in Michigan since 1966.

"It is with regret we have accepted the resignation of Dr Denniston" said Dr Smith. "He has been a leader in mental health programs in Michigan as Dept deputy director, and director of state facilities at Caro, Kalamazoo and Lapeer."

Dr Smith said, "We are fortunate that Dr Ethridge is available and has accepted the appointment at Oakdale. His experience in both institutional and community mental health programming will assist him in unifying and coordinating state and community services in the Center's 4-county district."

At Riverside Center, Dr Ethridge organized hospital programs to enhance continuity of care between the community and the state facility.

He worked with Michigan State University on Dept plans for university affiliated service development and manpower training programs.

Dr Ethridge received his BA in occupational therapy from Western Michigan University, his masters in vocational rehabilitation from Wayne State University and his doctorate from Michigan State University in the field of rehabilitation.

Dr Ethridge is past president of the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association and has served in numerous capacities on a national level for the American Occupational Therapy Assoc. He is past president of the National Assoc. of State Activity Therapy and Rehabilitation Directors and is a board member of the Cheff Foundation for the Handicapped.

Among his publications, he is co-author of a book, "Research in Occupational Therapy," which was also published in both American and Swiss editions of the "Journal of Occupational Therapy."

The State Journal, May 11, 1976

16 JUNE 1976

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS



OAKDALE DIRECTOR Dr David Ethridge (left) and Michigan Director of Mental Health Dr Donald Smith greet Bill Charles of Lapeer, director of the Department of Social Services in Lapeer County.

## State Health Director here

# Reception honors new Oakdale Center director

Dr David Ethridge, new director of Oakdale Center, pledged to bring the institution closer than ever to the community at a reception Monday to welcome him to his new position.

On hand for the occasion was Dr Donald Smith, director of the state Department of Mental Health, who said Ethridge is the "ideal man for the job" because of his strong background in human relations.

"He has my full support," Smith told a gathering of some 60 guests, most of whom represented community health and service organizations.

Smith traced the institution's history briefly. It was founded in 1895 as the Michigan School for the Feeble Minded and Epileptic and originally had 200 residents.

This number increased until by the late '40s and early '50s there were 4,400 there. Hopefully, there will never be that many again Smith said.

He predicted a decline in resident population in "the next decade" as care, treatment and individual attention improves.

Ethridge will be the fourteenth director of the institution now called Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities.

## Workers picket Oakdale Center over grievances

LAPEER — Members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 967 picketed the entrance to Oakdale Center Friday and requested a meeting with the center's director, Dr. David Ethridge.

Howard Smith, president of the local, said Ethridge had refused to meet with the group to discuss grievances.

G. E. Frost, director of personnel at Oakdale, said the administration never received official word that union members were going to picket.

Union officials said Ethridge had refused to meet with them, but Frost said Ethridge had met with them three times since he came to Oakdale as director in May.

Frost said a meeting is scheduled for Monday between Ethridge and union officials.

Ethridge was not available for comment.

# He's calling the signals loud and clear at Oakdale

by LLOYD STOEYER

When Dr. David Ethridge came to Oakdale Center some weeks ago the rumors came with him.

He was reputed to be a hatchet man, out to reduce staff and eliminate jobs. Some even said he'd eventually close the facility completely.

But for a man given all sorts of ulterior motives, Ethridge has come on loud and clear.

He has laid out Oakdale's future very simply to all who would listen. And some people are even starting to believe him.

Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities is going to drop more than 400 patients in coming months. And that's as it should be, he insists.

Most of the departing residents will be turned over to 2 new facilities nearing completion. One is the Macomb-Oakland Regional Center in the south. The other is Southgate Center in the Detroit area.

Others will be transferred to the Hillcrest Center in Howell.

Almost all of these people will be moving closer to the communities from which they came.

This won't mean cuts in staff, says Dr. Ethridge. Staffing has long been far below recommended standards at Oakdale. Keeping the present employees will improve the staff-resident ratio.

The resident exodus will also make possible tearing down some of Oakdale's oldest and no-longer-repairable buildings. Good riddance, says the director.

That won't be the end of cuts in the number of Oakdale residents, says the director.

But the next reductions will be gradual, coming over a period of 10 years or so until



Dr. David Ethridge believes in the direct approach

the number of residents levels off at 750 to 800.

That will mean staff reduction, but Dr. Ethridge says this will come almost entirely from normal turnover and attrition.

Rumors or not, that's what he sees in the future of Lapeer County's biggest employer.

Ethridge's ideas about running Oakdale are pretty straightforward, too.

In mental health care he's a moderate.

He believes in well-planned and individually designed programs to help the people in the center's care. There just aren't any shortcuts, he says.

There is little sense in releasing retarded residents to the community if they slip back into some of their old problems.

On the other hand, those who can be helped and who will benefit from leaving Oakdale should have the chance. In these cases everybody benefits, he says.

New drugs and new techniques have opened the doors to better ways to help the mentally retarded. But they're not cures in themselves, he says, only means to be used to reach residents so that progress can be made.

Nor does Dr. Ethridge believe Lapeer County communities should bear the responsibility of caring for all of Oakdale's released residents.

Residents from other parts of the state should be returned to their own communities, he says. We'll work with officials to see that this is carried out.

People from small towns such as Lapeer which have had state mental institutions for years are generally knowledgeable

about mental health, says the doctor.

They admit out-patient arrangements are important, but they still don't want residents placed in their immediate neighborhoods.

The Oakdale director pledges to open up more avenues of communications with the community.

He wants more townspeople visiting the Oakdale grounds and more opportunities for Oakdale residents who can handle it to take a part in activities in town.

He also pledges to be open and direct in his dealings with the Oakdale staff.

"We'll try to keep them informed," he says. "There'll be no big surprises. I don't like surprises myself."

The director sees himself as a "facilitator" who will help keep the voters informed about the needs for mental health funds and who will work to use the funds provided to the best advantage.

Ethridge is an Illinois preacher's son, one of 9 children.

He studied occupational therapy at Western Michigan University, planning to work with polio patients until the Salk vaccine wiped out the need for that.

Except for a stretch in the Air Force, he has been in Michigan mental health institutions and programs since 1956. Part of this time he has been in the central mental health office reorganizing planning at institutions throughout the state.

He has helped to establish community mental health boards throughout the state.

Rumors he was coming to Lapeer to close Oakdale got started because he was director of Riverside Center in Ionia when a decision was made to close it.

The explanation, he says, is simple.

Only 1/4 of the former hospital for the criminally insane was being used since its conversion to a small psychiatric center.

The state badly needed additional prison space and the Ionia facility was already built as a maximum security institution.

So the decision to take it over for use as a prison was a natural one. "I couldn't argue with the state's decision," he says.

How about his own future here?

"I'm committed for 5 years," he says.

"After that it's time for someone with new energy and new ideas. 5 years is as long as anyone should stay anywhere in this type of job."

Less than a 5-year tenure, he believes, wouldn't give him the chance to carry through his ideas.

**Huge construction project will probably continue anyhow**

(See BUILDING, Page 28-A)

do so," Dr. Elbridge says. "It's too bad

GLS should make a review," says Bob

relationships between the regional health planning agency and Oakdale officials

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# Building plan

(Continued from Page 1)

to do so by the state. \$15,375,000 had been the architect's estimate, Dr Ethridge says.

Unfortunately, bids had been let the same week President Carter went on national television to announce his voluntary wage and price guidelines.

Contractors immediately hiked their bids in anticipation of federal wage and price controls, Dr Ethridge says.

What's more, a severe cement and concrete shortage has caused those prices to double.

Dr Ethridge says he met with the architect to see if anything could be cut. Everything in the plan was mandated by the federal guidelines.

"We've got the money to do it anyway," he says. "With our ICF/MR certification, we've already collected \$24 million from HEW. Whatever we don't use goes into the general fund to help out the state."

Even without the last minute change in cost estimate, the GLS-HSA review committee would probably have recommended against the program anyway, Tornow says. The staff analysis of the application had recommended against it.

According to the staff analysis, Oakdale will have a capacity of 1,133 residents after Phase 1 is finished. But Oakdale programs to place some residents in the community could reduce its population to about 600.

"The information supplied by the applicant has not indicated any quantitative determination of need," the analysis said. "Most of the data they did supply was inconsistent."

"To my knowledge no board member from GLS has ever visited our facilities," Dr Ethridge says. "If they bothered to, there would be no question of need."

Dr Ethridge also accused the review committee of having a parochial attitude. It considered only the beds needed for the GLS area (Lapeer, Genesee and Shiawassee Counties).

"Half of our residents still come from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties," Dr Ethridge says.

In the analysis, Silverstein predicted the Oakdale would be able to meet the staffing requirements provided by the federal government. It doesn't now.

But as the number of residents at Oakdale goes down, the number of staffers needed will, too.

The analysis questioned Oakdale's reliability in its proposed cost figures.

It also questioned whether Oakdale and the mental health dept are concerned about containing rising health care costs.

The high cost of the renovation "would place Oakdale in the highest range of health facility construction cost," the analysis said.

It also charged that Oakdale didn't consider any less-expensive alternatives to its present program.

Dr Ethridge says Oakdale has the



Bob Tornow



Dr David Ethridge

money to remodel 1,000 beds, but is only doing 600. Some 400 residents will be placed in the community, which is much less expensive to the state.

"This entire plan is based on cost containment," he says.

He adds that whether or not the residents are placed in the community, the renovation has been mandated by federal law. It may be expensive, but it must be done, Dr Ethridge says.

But the GLS-HSA review committee agreed with the staff analysis. It voted 8-2 to recommend against the certificate of need.

Lapeer County commr Barry Shoults was one of the eight voting against Oakdale's application.

He told his fellow county commissioners last Thursday that the mental health dept was uncooperative in providing information.

"It was obvious the mental health dept had no idea what the project was going to cost," he said. "I thought you'd be interested in knowing how the state is squandering our money."

Tornow and Dr Ethridge agree on 1 thing, however. Even if the full board votes against the certificate of need, they say, the state health dept is likely to overrule that decision.

The project is already underway, Tornow says. And the mental health dept (which runs Oakdale) is part of the state health dept. Tornow can't imagine a state agency admitting it's wrong.

Dr Ethridge cites different reasons. "If they don't (continue the project)," he says, "the state of Michigan has to pay back the federal government \$24 million. That would create chaos in the state treasury. The governor could never abide that."

Furthermore, the state would be losing \$12 million a year in federal money after this fiscal year.

And a state law requires the renovation to be done, whether or not there are any federal guidelines. The state would have to pay the entire bill. And this would have to be done within the limitations imposed by the Headlee amendment.

Whoever is right, this Wednesday's meeting of the GLS-HSA board promises to be a noisy one.

Tornow charges that this is a case of the state feeling it must spend federal money, just because it's available.

"I'm proud of my committee for standing its ground," he says.

Dr Ethridge says he's going to argue long and loud for his point of view.

"I'd rather get them with us than fighting us," he says.

Some time in the future he'll have to go back to the GLS-HSA board on Phase 2 of the project. And he'll also have to go back for planned community homes for the mentally handicapped who don't need to be placed at Oakdale.

If the relationship with GLS-HSA goes sour now, Dr Ethridge comments, it's likely to stay sour.

## Dirty words

Charles Pompa is free on \$500 bond after being charged with being disorderly by cussing and swearing.

Pompa, 33, of Pontiac was arrested here Dec 5.



LAPEER, MICHIGAN

WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 1978

# Say Oakdale abuse is not widespread

by HANK SCHALLER

Abuse and neglect of mentally retarded residents at the Oakdale Center in Lapeer is apparently less than once was feared.

But a state-ordered probe of Michigan's largest mental institution did uncover 117 allegations of resident abuse and another 77 of neglect.

These are among the conclusions of an investigation ordered by Governor William Milliken in response to County Press news stories and editorials.

Details of the 7-week probe by an investigative Task Force were released Tuesday.

Some of the abuse and neglect allegations have been turned over to 2 state departments for further investigation and possible legal action.

"I'm relieved because there's certainly no Plymouth Center here," James Jordan, special assistant to the governor on mental health affairs, told The County Press Tuesday.

Jordan was referring to the Plymouth Center for Human Development in Northville where a similar investigation resulted in the dismissal of 80 persons accused of abuse and neglect of residents.

"I found the report far more encouraging than I expected," he explained. "But there are a number of allegations that warrant further investigation."

"Abuse and neglect pretty much covers what I'm talking about. But I don't want to throw a scare into Oakdale employees. There are just some special concerns that



James Jordan

merit investigation.

"Whatever problems there are appear to be limited to relatively few buildings."

The task force has asked that the Oakdale Center administration review these specific allegations.

Meanwhile, in Lansing, Governor Milliken lauded the efforts of the 5-member investigative task force.

"While I have not had an opportunity at this point to review the full report, it

appears the investigative task force did a thorough job of investigating allegations of abuse at Oakdale and making recommendations for change," Milliken stated in a press release.

Milliken said the report will be forwarded to the Michigan Department of Mental Health and Social Services.

Jordan said that Mental Health and Social Services officials are expected to comment on the report and offer specific recommendations on implementing it.

"We'd like to have those recommendations back to the governor by the first of the year," he said. "Some specific recommendations will be acted on before then."

As a result of the investigation, the Task Force has directed recommendations at everyone from Governor Milliken to Oakdale resident rights advisor Bob Rose.

They include an evaluation of the civil service appeal process, changes in the abuse investigative process and recommendations that appropriations to the Dept of Mental Health be increased.

Recommendations also ask Mental Health officials to take a look at labor-management techniques and change the way physical injuries are reported.

It was also recommended that Oakdale Center increase its inservice training of employees.

Jordan said money for this training would probably come from \$1 million set aside to improve training in mental health institutions.

He added that this training should be phased in by July.

This training would not only involve

the orientation of new employees, it would include periodic upgrading of skills by the present staff," Jordan explained.

The investigation at Oakdale was a gargantuan task.

A full-time investigator conducted 133 interviews with past and present Oakdale employees, a few Oakdale residents and some parents and state legislators.

Those interviews produced 388 allegations of everything from abuse and neglect of residents to inappropriate management techniques.

Among these were accusations that some Oakdale employees were kicking residents, others were supposedly striking residents with objects or with their hands.

Other allegations were that some employees were inciting one resident to attack another or hating or leaving residents. Nearly half of the abuse allegations were too old or vague to be investigated, however.

The largest single category of neglect allegations was the improper dispensing of medications and lack of medical treatment.

The alleged neglect took several forms. Some persons testified that residents had inappropriate clothing, food and psychological treatment. Others testified that residents attending the Woodside School arrived dirty or in need of medical care.

Other neglect allegations were that residents were left unsupervised in Oakdale buildings and on buses.

The report indicated that information regarding patterns of abuse and neglect

(See OAKDALE, Page 8-A)

## ALLEGATIONS OF EMPLOYEE TO RESIDENT ABUSE

Type	Number	Percent of total
Kicking	04	3.42
Inciting Residents	04	3.42
Striking with Objects	11	9.40
Verbal Abuse	18	15.38
Striking without Objects	24	20.56
Generalized, Vague, Old	56	47.86
TOTALS	117	100.00

# ✓ Oakdale probe

(Continued from Page 1)

were being sent to the Departments of Mental Health and Social Services for further investigation.

Even so, the committee concluded it was impossible to determine the scope of abuse and neglect at Oakdale.

"Our analysis reveals that there is a large number of unexplained resident injuries . . . the report indicated. 'Task Force members suspect that staff at the building level may be falsely witnessing these reports for one another.'"

Jordan explained that it was his impression and that of the Task Force that there is "collusion among attendant nurses to protect each other and perhaps provide false testimony."

Even so, Jordan stressed that the vast majority of Oakdale employees are "dedicated."

"I think the recommendations are clear there is a need for training and including direct care staff in decisions made on patient care," he said.

The Task Force report also concluded that there is a significant amount of resident-to-resident abuse at Oakdale in part caused by neglect and in part by the inappropriate grouping of residents by the administration.

While the Task Force received no evidence of the cover-up of abuse by Oakdale Director Dr David Ethridge and his staff, it did receive allegations that attendant nurses and shift supervisors "are regularly involved in suppression of facts regarding employee to resident abuse and neglect at Oakdale."

The Task Force recommended a thorough investigation of physical injury and unusual incident reports, to ferret out those that are falsified.

Investigators also received allegations that Oakdale supervisors sometime use inappropriate management and supervisory techniques.

These included condoning inadequate staff coverage in buildings, not requiring employees to read Oakdale policies and procedures, lack of shift coordination and a feeling that it is fruitless to discipline employees because those decisions will not be supported by upper level administrators.

The Task Force concluded that an "us versus them" attitude prevails among the direct care staff in its relations with professionals and the administration.

Investigators added that Local 567 of the American Federation of State, County

## Here are findings 'in a nutshell'

It took 78 pages for the Task Force that investigated the alleged abuse and neglect of Oakdale Center residents to explain its findings.

But these were the conditions the 5-member team found in a nutshell. 135 persons were interviewed during the 7-week investigation and those interviews resulted in 388 allegations.

Of those accusations, 117 were of resident abuse and another 77 of neglect.

Some of the allegations have been turned over to the Departments of Mental Health and Social Service for further investigation and possible legal action.

The investigation produced allegations of the regular cover-up of abuse by attendant nurses and supervisors.

It detailed inappropriate management and supervisory techniques being used by Oakdale supervisors.

The report uncovered an "us versus them" attitude that prevails among the direct care staff in its relations with professionals and the administration.

It detailed the widespread employee dislike for Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded standards that would individualize the treatment of Oakdale residents.

The report included recommendations to the governor, the Department of Mental Health, and Oakdale administration.

The investigators encouraged a review of the Civil Service grievance procedure and a single team of special investigators to handle abuse probes.

It asked the State Legislature to increase its appropriation to the Department of Mental Health and Oakdale Center.

Investigators suggested labor-management consultants be hired to help the administration and union work out problems.

Recommendations were made to increase the funding of the Office of Recipient Rights and insure more accurate reporting on unusual incident reports.

Probers also asked the residents be grouped by their functioning levels to avoid resident-to-resident abuse.

and Municipal Employees promotes a "good guys versus bad guys" image in its in-house publication, "We the People."

They referred specifically to cartoons depicting "Dr Ethridge as a monster who enjoys torturing innocent employees."

"While neither the union nor the administration is totally at fault, the Task Force believes that poor labor-management tactics on both sides have led to series of skirmishes," he report continues.

"It is the opinion of the Task Force that the cultural values subscribed to by the typical Oakdale attendant support the notion that mentally retarded residents are "different" and therefore "not as good" as normally functioning people."

"Persons with these attitudes can also develop the inability to empathize with residents ("they aren't human like we are") making it easier to physically abuse or neglect them without experiencing feelings of guilt."

The report also documented the widespread employee dislike for Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICFMR) standards. These standards individualize treatment for each resident.

In addition to their other activities, Task Force members conducted 10 special investigations while at Oakdale. Details and results of the investigation were not included in the report.

These investigations included:  
A review of attendant complaints of what they considered questionable administrative practices in 2 Oakdale buildings.

An investigation of the current Oakdale practice of having attendants perform clean catheterizations of some residents.

An investigation of meals being served in 2 buildings.

A probe into the death of an infant resident.

The review of allegations that a resident was sent to the Woodside School with a broken jaw.

An investigation into an allegation that residents were in danger of falling into 20 to 30-foot excavations on the Oakdale grounds.

A fact-finding investigation into allegations by 2 Oakdale residents that they were beaten by Oakdale employees.

A probe of allegations that the failure of Oakdale to give its resident annual Pap smears constitutes neglect.

And a investigation of the pregnancy of a resident.

The Task Force referred the results of these investigations to Mental Health and Social Services officials for further action.

The Oakdale Center Investigative Task Force was headed up by Donald Hilton. Hilton works out of the Office of the Inspector General for the Michigan Department of Social Services.

The other DSS representatives were David Fern from the Bureau of Regulatory Services and Frederick Wise from the Office of Institutional Abuse Services.

The representatives from the Department of Mental Health included Jan Nagy from the Monitoring, Licensure and Standards division and Linda Coleman Shirkey, the assistant director of the appeals division of the Office of Recipient Rights.

12-13-1978

PAGE 8-A

LAPEER COUNTY PRESS... LAPEER, MICHIGAN

# Probers recommend many Oakdale changes

by HANK SCHALLER

A week investigation of alleged abuse and neglect of Oakdale Center residents spawned recommendations on how to improve conditions both in Lapeer and other state institutions.

The investigative Task Force that sorted through hundreds of allegations recommended courses of action to Governor William Milliken, the Michigan Legislature, Michigan Department of Mental Health and the Oakdale administration.

Although James Jordan, special assistant to the governor of mental health affairs, agreed that meeting these recommendations would be expensive, he said funds would be made available to the Department of Mental Health.

On Monday, Governor Milliken announced that Mental Health expenditures would be exempt from any spending reduction he orders if the economy slows down.

Investigators asked that Milliken take a look at the Civil Service grievance appeal process that often overturns discipline taken against employees accused of abuse and neglect.

Task Force members also recommended that Milliken review the effectiveness of the current way that abuse and neglect allegations are investigated.

The Task Force observed that facilities like Oakdale Center are subjected to the conflicting scrutiny of a plethora of investigators... the report indicated that Milliken review the effectiveness of the current way that abuse and neglect allegations are investigated.

At present, various agencies in the Department of Mental Health and Social Services become involved in abuse investigations as do the State Police. The Oakdale task force asked Milliken to consider the formation of a team of

special investigators independent of the Department of Mental Health to handle abuse probes.

The report recommended to the Legislature that it increase its appropriations to the Department of Mental Health and the Oakdale Center.

Investigators said more money was needed to complete Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICFMR) certification at Oakdale. These standards would individualize the treatment of mentally retarded residents.

The report added that more funds were needed to accelerate the placement of Oakdale residents in the community and to fund the Office of Recipient Rights to the levels it should be.

At Oakdale now, resident rights advisor Rob Rose works alone although various studies have recommended that he have assistants.

The 5-member investigative team made several recommendations to the Department of Mental Health.

It asked for an analysis of the problems caused by the current Civil Service appeal process and an evaluation of the effectiveness of institution personnel offices in dealing with it.

Chief investigator Donald Hilton and his fellow probers also recommended that labor-management consultants be assigned to each regional office to help administrators and unions work out problems.

They asked that Mental Health officials evaluate the policy of counting supervisors in direct care staff ratios and develop a clear policy on the use of restraint.

Other recommendations were twice yearly evaluations of resident programs and restoration of the funding lost for 27

positions at Oakdale Center this year.

The report also asked that Oakdale Center be reimbursed for the cost of the Task Force investigation.

Investigators recommended resident rights advisors like Rob Rose obtain assistance in finding out what his role is in relation to other segments of the institution.

They said advisors should develop a system for logging incident reports and then use the reports to identify patterns of resident injury.

The Oakdale team also asked advisors to make periodic visits to buildings, meet with the staff and pull records at random to see if treatment plans are being followed.

One other area of concern to the Oakdale team was the use of personal injury and unusual incident reports. Several recommendations were made to the Oakdale administration after studying all the reports filed in September.

Investigators recommended that the Oakdale administration insist on accurate reporting on these forms and hold supervisors responsible for their completion.

The team also recommended that Oakdale improve its relations with Oakdale parents.

Other recommendations related to resident care were that higher level administrators be assigned to afternoons, nights and weekends and that staffing ratios be adjusted to the differing needs of the residents in each building.

Investigators asked that administrators develop relief policies that guarantee supervision of residents during employee breaks and meals as well as sick and annual leaves.

The team also requested that protective

measures for staff that report abuse be explored.

One of the most critical needs the team referred was that of inservice training of both the direct care staff and middle management.

This training would be in the areas of physical and behavioral management techniques and instruction in how to complete necessary reports.

Among other recommendations to the Oakdale administration were that practices that cause direct care staff to work 6 days in a row be evaluated.

Investigators also asked that staffing ratios in all buildings meet ICFMR requirements whether the building is certified or not.

They recommended that an employee discipline policy be developed and made available to all staff.

One other set of recommendations asked that the Oakdale administration group residents by functioning level to avoid resident-to-resident abuse.

Investigators also suggested that residents be given a homelike environment and efforts to place residents in the community be accelerated.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

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LAPEER COUNTY PRESS ... LA

# Oakdale gains standoff in renovation hassle

by ED ZDROJEWSKI

GLS Health Systems Agency (GLS-HSA) staffers failed narrowly last Wednesday to convince their board not to grant a certificate of need for Oakdale Center's \$19.5 million renovation program.

After 3½ hours of debate, board members wound up with a 9-9 tie vote on the motion to reject the project which is already underway.

There is some disagreement over exactly what the tie vote means. But all agree that it means the motion failed.

Oakdale director Dr. David Ethridge took that to mean GLS-HSA is sending a message of approval to the Michigan Dept. of Public Health, which must make the final decision.

"The 9-9 vote is a tremendous reversal of the 8-2 vote of the board's review committee against the project," he said after the meeting.

However, GLS-HSA staffers are interpreting the vote differently.

"Since we did not have a majority vote of the board, we will have no recommendation to the state," said staffer Owen Crawley last Thursday.

She said the negative staff and review committee reports will be sent to Lansing, as well as a transcript of the discussion at the board meeting.

The tie vote was the culmination of a dispute that developed between GLS-HSA and the Michigan Dept. of Mental Health, which is in charge of Oakdale Center.

A number of buildings at Oakdale are being renovated.

The federal government certified Oakdale as an Intermediate Care Facility for Mental Retardation (ICF/MR) on the condition that it complete the project by July 1982.

When project planning started 2½ years ago, the mental health dept. interpreted the law to mean an application for certificate of need wouldn't have to be made for a state institution.

Last year Congress amended the law. By early this year the mental health dept. was revising its interpretation. In April a certificate of need was filed. By this time construction was already underway.

That angered the GLS-HSA's board's review committee at a meeting Nov. 27. So did a last minute change in the application, raising the projected cost from \$15.4 million to \$19.5 million.

Furthermore, staffer Jack Silverstein had written an analysis of the application. The analysis recommended denial of the certificate of need on various grounds.

Silverstein's report said Oakdale officials failed to demonstrate community need for the project and any attempt at cost containment.

Dr. Ethridge attended last Wednesday's full board meeting in Flint. He brought several of his staff, representatives of employee and parents groups and a representative of the mental health dept.

The GLS-HSA board began the debate by taking statements from the public.

"I'm pretty concerned about this as are all the parents," said Ken Trimmer of the Oakdale Parents Assn. "The retarded citizens can't come to the board and present their case. If this certificate of need is disapproved, it would be very disappointing."

Joseph Ballard, president of the employees' union, had similar comments.

"ICF standards mandate certain physical plant requirements to house the residents," he said in a letter passed around. "Remodeling seems, in my judgment, the most cost effective way to accomplish this goal."

"I have also noted a vast improvement in the quality of training the direct care staff receives in order to better service the residents' needs."

A good deal of battle developed when it came time for Dr. Ethridge to begin his presentation. Dr. Ethridge had developed a lengthy written document and slide presentation for the meeting.

However, board rules say that no new



Barry Shoults



Dr. David Ethridge

material can be presented at the full board hearing. Dr. Ethridge could present only the same information which had been presented to the review committee Nov. 27.

Acting board president Betty Carlson ruled that the document and slide show were new material. Dr. Ethridge wouldn't be allowed to present them.

Board member Dr. Bernard Herman objected.

"This board has to make a rational decision," he said. "I can't vote without full information."

Member Melvin Stratten argued that GLS-HSA's mandate was to rule only on the application made, not listen to emotional appeals. It would be a slap in the face of the review committee to consider anything other than the information it received.

"If we negate the role of the committee," he said, "no one would care to work on a committee."

The matter came to a vote. The board voted 2-1 to stick to the rules and not allow new material.

"Since you have not chosen to use the information given to you," Dr. Ethridge said, "I have very little to say."

Then he launched into much the same argument he had given the review committee.

Oakdale was asking for 424 new beds. Another 268 patients would be placed in the community throughout the GLS area (Lapeer, Genesee and Shiawassee Counties).

"I think that's very optimistic given community attitudes," he commented. "That leaves a shortfall of 278 we are

leaving unaccounted for with the intent to return to the Oakland, Macomb and Wayne County area."

The certificate of need would be for a Phase I part of the program. Phases 2 and 3 would be needed if the 278 patients couldn't be sent back to the Detroit area.

As to the charge of not seeking alternatives, the state had worked the alternative into the plan — placing 268 residents in homes in the community.

Of course this involves building the homes to federal standards. And it involves convincing communities to accept the homes. Flint, for example, has a city ordinance prohibiting new homes for the retarded.

Next Silverstein presented his side of the argument.

He said he could have judged the project by a new set of standards. But instead, he chose to use the same standards he would apply to a private hospital.

The heart of Silverstein's argument was a series of bed figures. Oakdale is certified under ICF/MR for 1,175 beds at present.

Silverstein added 60. Oakdale's projected admission rate to 1982. Then he subtracted the 268 Oakdale planned to place in the community and the 424 beds called for in the application.

"340 are left and completely unaccounted for," Silverstein said. "I have no idea what is going to happen to those 340 residents."

He added that there are many feasible alternatives to the present remodeling program.

"If they were ever considered by the state, I don't know about them," he said.

In his rebuttal, Dr. Ethridge accused Silverstein of distorting the figures.

While Oakdale is certified for 1,175 beds, he said, there are only 1,050 residents. From this you must subtract 80 beds from the recently completed skilled nursing unit, 424 beds in the application and 268 to be placed in the community.

The leaves 278 residents — the number the mental health dept. hopes to send back to the metropolitan Detroit area.

Bob Tornow, chairman of the review committee, moved for denial of the petition.

The discussion that followed was relatively brief. A letter from board member Barry Shoults was read to the board. Shoults couldn't attend the meeting because of a law exam in Detroit.

Lapeer County and the state need Oakdale Center, Shoults wrote. If he thought the certificate of need were necessary for Oakdale's survival, he would vote for it.

But the issue here was the mental health dept's accountability to the state's taxpayers, he wrote. (His letter is reprinted in a letter to the Editor on Page 1-B of today's County Press.)

Board member Gene Cowardelli took exception to those comments.

"I think we have a couple of bureaucracy-butting heads," he said. "Oakdale is one of the oldest institutions in the state. We either have to update it or move those residents out."

Board member James Sam called for the question. The vote was 9-9. Tornow's motion failed for lack of a majority.

The 11 Lapeer County members present, Cowardelli and Marian Whitney, voted against Tornow's motion.

Both Dr. Ethridge and GLS-HSA officials commented that the public health dept. would most likely approve the certificate of need, too.

The Michigan Dept. of Mental Health is part of the Michigan Dept. of Public Health. So, in effect, public health is making its own facility.

"I'm somewhat disappointed," Shoults commented later, "but what really needed to be accomplished has been."

Oakdale and the mental health dept. have now been forced to recognize that they, too, have to be held accountable for their expenditures.



20 DECEMBER 1978

# Ethridge working on response to task force report

by HANK SCHALLER

Oakdale Center Director Dr. David Ethridge and his staff are working on a response to a state-ordered investigation of alleged abuse and neglect of mentally retarded residents.

Last week, Governor William Milliken released details of a 7-week probe which uncovered 117 allegations of resident abuse, and another 77 of neglect at the Lapeer mental institution.

Milliken ordered a 5-member investigative Task Force to Oakdale in late August in response to County Press editorials and news stories.

Some of the allegations have been turned over to the Departments of Mental Health and Social Services for further investigation and possible prosecution.

Even so, Oakdale spokesman Fred Campbell told The County Press Tuesday that the administration is satisfied that resident abuse is not widespread.

"We are completing our draft responses to many of the recommendations contained in the report," Campbell explained.

On Monday, Dr. Ethridge met with Acting Michigan Mental Health Director Dr. Vernon Stehman to discuss the Task Force findings.

"We will be submitting our draft to the Department of Mental Health which will prepare the draft that will eventually go to

Governor Milliken," Campbell explained.

He added that Mental Health officials will meet next week to draft the final response.

The Task Force report included numerous recommendations to the governor, the Department of Mental Health and Oakdale administration.

Among those were a review of the Civil Service grievance procedure and a single team of special investigators to handle abuse probes.

Other recommendations called for increased appropriations from the Legislature and labor-management consultants to help iron out differences between the administration and union.

The investigation also uncovered allegations of the regular cover-up of abuse by attendant nurses and supervisors.

"While the report cites some problems we are working on, it in no way is an indictment of the Oakdale Center staff," Campbell said.

"We view the recommendations as positive and helpful to us. The report helps us understand some of the problems and indicates overall that our staff is doing a good job."

Campbell noted that many of the recommendations in the Task Force report were included in the earlier Cohen and Bishop studies of the Michigan mental health system.





REALLY GETTING INTO A SONG at the  
Oakdale Christmas show are recreational

therapists (from left) Kathy Holcomb, Patty  
Sims and Cathy Benkert.

## Yule show's Oakdale hit

A Christmas talent show put on by Oakdale residents and staff delighted a full house last Thursday night at Woodside School.

There were songs by a resident chorus, a staff chorus, a combined chorus and by soloists and small groups.

The production was directed by Tom Cawood, Oakdale's speech therapist with help from assistant speech therapist Sue Miller.

It's the 2nd such show produced by Oakdale in recent months.

The programs give residents "a night out" and performing brings out talent and

communications in residents that surprises many who work with them, one Oakdale spokesman said.

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# Oakdale doubt remains

by HANK SCHALLER

Oakdale Center attendant nurses are working in a shadow of guilt and doubt. Union officials at the Lapeer mental institution maintain that the findings of a 7-week investigation of alleged abuse and neglect has the direct care staff "worried and frustrated."

Last week, Governor William Milliken released details of the probe which uncovered 11 "allegations of resident abuse and another 7" of neglect.

"The dark cloud of abuse and neglect still hangs over us," says American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 567 vice president Bob Kopasz.

"This cloud has not been dissipated by the Task Force," Kopasz explains. "They have only increased the worry and frustration of Oakdale employees."

Both Kopasz and local 567 president Joseph Ballard criticized as vague the probe ordered by Governor Milliken in response to County Press news stories and editorials.

"The Task Force made allegations that the director care staff cover up abuse and neglect on a regular basis," Kopasz explains. "This statement negates the whole probe because it alleges this is happening, but offers no substantial proof."

Though Ballard agrees that in rare instances there may be employee cover-up of abuse and neglect, he says it is not as frequent as the Task Force report implies.

"I'm sure that 99% of the Oakdale direct care staff are honest and straight forward," he says. "Just like I'm sure that there are some individuals capable of

abusing the residents...  
One portion of the report that upsets union officials states that there is a set of "informal rules" among Oakdale employees that support cover up of abuse and neglect.

(See DOUBT, Page 2-A)



# Oakdale in the Newspapers

December 20, 1978, continued from page 61

## ✓ Doubt

(Continued from Page 1)

staff and the administration.

"In fact, from the evidence obtained by the Task Force, it appears that the informal rules support cover-up of abuse and neglect and encourage front line employees to fabricate incident reports and falsely witness for one another," the report states.

But Ballard denies that Oakdale employees engage in widespread falsification of Physical Injury and Unusual Incident Reports.

"Whenever I see an Oakdale employee filling out a UIR (Unusual Incident Report) they pay damn close attention to the facts because of all this talk about abuse," he says.

"80 to 90% of the accidents and incidents reported are run-of-the-mill occurrences. But there are some where no one knows how the injury happened."

One other Task Force observation criticizes Oakdale employees for considering residents as children in spite of their age and functioning level.

Investigators stated that "employees believe they have the responsibility to control them (residents) and inherent right to use whatever means are necessary to achieve that end."

"Persons with these attitudes can also develop the inability to empathize with residents (they aren't human like we

work with the most profoundly retarded," he says. "They fuss and fidget like grandmothers when their residents have problems."

"It's just not possible to do all the things the staff does for the residents and not consider yourself a parent."

"No one here feels you will get as good a one-to-one relationship treating them as a client," Ballard says. "That might be all right for a psychologist who sees a resident an hour a week. But not someone who sees him every day."

Even so, union officials were relieved that the probe determined that abuse and neglect is less than once was feared.

"I'm not sorry that the Task Force came," Ballard says. "I've heard some dismay over the charges of cover up. But mostly what I've heard is relief."

Still, union officials agree that much work must be done to improve relations between employees and the administration.

"I guess the best example of the distrust that exists were some recent ceremonies to honor Oakdale employees for years of service," Ballard says.

He explained that only 11 of 80 5-year employees and 15 out of 80 Oakdale workers of 10 to 15 years tenure bothered to show up.

"Most people here aren't willing to put themselves up for display as Oakdale employees because they aren't that proud," Ballard says.

Even though Ballard has been among the sternest critics of Oakdale Director Dr. David Ethridge, he agrees that Dr. Ethridge has the best interests of Oakdale workers at heart.

"Dr. Ethridge is fighting for the survival of this institution because he feels that it's best for the community," Ballard explains. "I can honestly say that I've come to respect him even if I don't like him."

But when it comes to management employee relations, it stinks out there.

Ballard says that the union's 40 to 50% success rate in Civil Service grievance appeals bears him out.

"There's no way the union should be winning more than 20% of its appeals once they reach the 4th step," he explains. "But the Oakdale administration makes us appeal everything. To me, this shows administrators are being heavy-handed when they don't have to be."

Ballard says the local is encouraged by a recommendation that the state investigate the effectiveness of the personnel offices of its institutions.

He figures the unbending attitudes of administrators like Oakdale Director of Personnel Jack Frost cause more problems than anything else.

"We should be able to solve more problems than we do at the first grievance step," Ballard explains. "We wind up appealing everything, though."

Union officials agree that there is a need for more training for the management levels on down.

Ballard also hopes the report will generate the new staff Oakdale needs to care for its residents.

"Those 8-to-1 staffing ratios out there at Oakdale don't mean a thing," he says. "The hospital is perpetually short of people because of the total care those residents require."

AFSCME officials fully expect some employees to be disciplined and prosecuted as a result of the Task Force probe.

"I would be surprised if the Task Force spent as much time here as it did and didn't uncover some legitimate abuse," Ballard says.

"I just hope any dismissals and suspensions that may come are based on concrete evidence and not just suspicions."

### No-show arrested

A Lapeer man is free on \$500 bond after his arrest Friday. John Hart is charged with failing to appear in court. Hart, 27, lives at 1866 Peppermill Rd.



Joseph Ballard

are), making it easier to physically abuse or neglect them without feelings of guilt," the report continues.

While Ballard agrees that Oakdale employees have developed a parent-child relationship with the residents in their charge, he insists it is not a relationship that condones abuse and neglect.

"Sure, we refer to the residents as 'kids,' or 'boys and girls,'" he explains. "These are natural ways to describe our residents. The residents are kids in the bodies of men and women."

"Just watch our residents. Their imaginations are still child-like and there's nothing wrong with that. I work with guys in their 50's that call me 'Daddy Ballard' and others that call me 'Joe.' I wouldn't want it any other way."

"Oakdale employees call residents their kids and there's nothing wrong with that either," Ballard says.

"The job of an attendant nurse is to dress residents, feed them, put them to bed, watch television with them and talk over their problems. That sounds like being a parent to me."

"Sure, our residents are not normal and I'm not using that in an unsavory connotation," he explains. "The people we work with are handicapped because God didn't give them everything to work with."

Ballard defied the Task Force to prescribe treatment any better than that given by some Oakdale oldtimers.

"Some of our oldest line employees

# Charlie's gift—a lifetime of curiosity

by BOBBY MATHER

Charlie Marshalick, 77, is now a part of Lapeer County's history.

It became official Monday morning, when he donated his large collection of Americana to the Lapeer County Historical Museum.

The collection includes just about anything and everything that caught Charlie's eye over the past 50 years or so.

Although he has been a resident of Oakdale for over 50 years, he would never be admitted today. He came to the Home from the St Ignace area on the UP end of the Mackinac Bridge where he was brought up and went to school.

His main problem when he came to the area was that he had no close family.

Through the years he was employed by several Lapeer businesses, including 3 drug stores.

Under Supt Haynes, 2nd head at what was then the Lapeer State Home, Charlie was given permission to have a storage shed next to the building in which he lived. In it he began his amazing collection of antique artifacts. It includes:

— A large collection of old lapel pins, many political.

— One of the earliest radios made, which he bought from Walter's Music for \$60.

— About 400 early photograph records, including 4 made by Charles Lindbergh, one after he landed at the Paris airport.

— A collection of old metal toys, now highly prized by collectors.

— Old razors, a cream churn, a large old food chopper used years ago in the Home kitchen.

— Old tools, including a machine to compress corks to be placed in medicine bottles and another to clip the ends of cigars.

Charlie wore out 3 bicycles riding back and forth from Oakdale to his various jobs. Now his health is failing, and he no longer rides.

The county Historical Society was delighted to accept his collection. It's currently on display in the museum's front window.

The museum, across the street from the Post Office, is now open for the summer, from 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays and Tuesdays. Admission is free.

The rent-free building is provided by the 1st National Bank of Lapeer.

Charlie's lively interest in the things he saw about him has turned into a boon for Lapeer County residents. It led him to preserve irreplaceable objects that would otherwise have been thrown away.

And that's a big gift.

LAPEER, MICHIGAN



CHARLIE MARSHALICK (left) beams as he presents his unique collection of Americana to the Lapeer County Historical Museum. The gift was accepted by Art Aurand (right), longtime Historical Society member and museum staff member. Looking on is Fred Campbell, community relations director at Oakdale, where Charlie has lived for more than 50 years.