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 and maintenance man at the Home, a position he says, was left to him when the farm closed in 1989, 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.

“Apathy 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 volunteer labor, the Home ran as a farm as you’d ever want to see, Bentley said.

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

An average milk run of 200 registered Holstein cattle produced 4000 quarts of milk a day. $2 cows earned awards for giving 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 the first herd in the state to be tested for tuberculosis and Bogs Disease, he said. This was a big deal, he noted.

Bentley also boasted a bull which won 1st place at the National Dairy Show in Waterloo, Iowa about 1949.

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 huge.

“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 farmwork program.

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

“When we used to bring wagonloads of watermelons and muskmelons up to the cottage and let the kids eat all they wanted. It was a real treat,” he said.

Bentley even during a bumper crop year patients never had to eat one food until it was gone, he said.

“Flavourwise, food was better back then,” he said. “It was prepared on a smaller scale so it was more eye-appealing, too. More like homestyle cooking.”

When nutrition is considered, meals are better today, Bentley said. Dieters are more careful now to insure well balanced and nourishing food.

Bentley and about 100 male patients worked on the farm. “One of its purposes was to keep physically able boys occupied and to teach them a trade. It got the patients out of the building and into the fresh air,” he said.

Most of the patients were orphans who had normal potential but little other opportunity to develop it, he said.

Bentley said that the farm’s demise was partly due to a nationwide movement to get state institutions out of the farming business. Psychiatric also thought it did not benefit the patients, he said.

“I think they missed the boat on that one,” he said. “The thing that discouraged me most was the lack of appreciation in general for the therapy it provided patients who worked on the farm.

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Report From the State Home

Only When They Are Neglected

Oakdale in the Newspapers

Date Unknown Late 1960s-Early 1970s?
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.

“Th is 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.

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, instead of the giant state homes, such as Lapeer.

Health Dept. hikes fees

would be scaled down or closed.

The Care State Home increasing 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, that 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 1,024 employees. Since then, patients decreased 900 in number and the staff increased more than 200.

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

The state study recommends construction of hospitals in 5 areas. They are Detroit, Macomb, Kent, Grand Rapids and Saginaw Bay.

New state home and training schools would be built in 5 large urban areas, including Oakland and Macomb counties.

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

As for the mentally retarded, they would serve between 500 and 300 patients.

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

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

“It would be idealistic to me,” Spencer said. “It’s a good idea but it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.”

Spencer said the experts often propose 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 snowmobiles 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 complaints 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 loud and can’t be easily seen by motorists. We’re afraid someone is going to be killed or injured,” Whitney said.

~ 3 ~
Twins were State Home wards for 20 years — by mistake

No schooling provided

by mistake, and Twin brothers placed in wards of the Lapeer State Home.

I think it's unfair that the twins have been 'sacrificed' for their good fortune. The twins, Ronald and Donald Cowan, were placed in the Home at the age of 4. They were 14 months old when their mother, Mrs. Mary Montgomery, took them in. She was three months pregnant with her twins. She was very young, and her husband had been away for a long time, working in the oil fields. Mrs. Montgomery was left with a young family and a new baby. She decided to place the twins in the Home. She was very sad to do it, but it was the only option she had.

Ronald is now 22 and lives with his brother, Donald, at the Lapeer State Home. He has almost reached the age of majority, and he is now attending day school. Donald is now 24 and lives with his brother, Ronald, at the Lapeer State Home. He has also reached the age of majority, and he is now attending day school. The twins were placed in the Home without their knowledge. The Home was not aware of their age, and they were placed in the Home because of their young age. The twins have been in the Home for 20 years, and they have never had the opportunity to receive an education.

Ronald and Donald are now preparing to leave the Home. They are eager to start a new life and become independent. They are both very intelligent, and they have a bright future ahead of them. They are grateful to their mother, Mrs. Montgomery, for taking care of them when they were young. They are also grateful to the Home for providing them with a safe and secure environment.

The Home is now considering placing the twins in a foster home. They want to ensure that the twins receive the best possible care and education. The Home is also considering placing them in a special needs school. They want to ensure that the twins receive the best possible care and education.

Ronald and Donald are looking forward to the future. They are eager to start a new life and become independent. They are grateful to their mother, Mrs. Montgomery, for taking care of them when they were young. They are also grateful to the Home for providing them with a safe and secure environment. They are looking forward to a bright future ahead of them.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

State Home has 75th birthday

The Lapeer State Home celebrates its 75th anniversary this month. In Section C of a century many changes have taken place at the Lapeer State Home.

The history of the institution begins in 1913 when the Michigan Legislature appropriated $20,000 for a Home for the Emphasized and Etyotic. The Board of Directors in 1915 approved the site at 1020 Lapeer Avenue.

Oaks were removed in order to provide an open area. The site for the Home was then set.

The Home opened Aug. 1, 1897, with 200 patients. Nearly 800 applications for admission were made on a waiting list for the first year. Preference was given to institutional patients.

The home was divided into 8 sections, with patients and buildings to house them. Each section had its own living quarters, such as restaurants, classrooms, classrooms, and dayrooms.

The Home opened in 1897 with 15 patients. Children were housed in the old school, which became the Home School. The Home was considered important and a landmark was formed.

The administration building was a frame structure, opened in March 1898. The 45-room building cost $6,700. The building was the first of its kind in the United States.

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A chapel and an administration building were opened in 1898. The Home was considered important and a landmark was formed.

A combined chapel and recreation room was also opened in 1898. The Home was considered important and a landmark was formed.

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The Home was considered important and a landmark was formed.

This article is 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.

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 threw 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 Kriger, behavioral treatment program director, and other staff members, it is called compensatory environment and is unique to Lapeer. Mrs. Mary Kay Moore, the 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 13 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 behavioral problems presented by the residents.

In examining the living environment of the residents, it was discovered that the residents lived in an environment of unkind routine. They got up and ate breakfast at the same time, dressed in the same clothes, sat in the same chairs in the same rooms 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.

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

Once 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 corners 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 human care and if it provides stimulation for the patients, according to Kriger.

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 Dunlop, 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 in October, Len has broken only 3 windows. In 1969 he broke 16 windows," Mrs. Moore said.

"Our pioneer efforts paid off beyond our greatest 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." wrote Kriger in a report presented at the Michigan Association for Retarded Children in Marquette in June.

Kriger said the association’s response was enthusiastic to the new concept.

"The needs of the severely and profoundly retarded have long been neglected. When something unique is introduced to the field it is welcomed, especially in a parent’s group like the MARC," he said.

Kriger 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.
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. H.E. Berger, hospital medical director, said the laboratory began operation in 1966 with no money and in borrowed space.

"We met with James Higgins, associate professor 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, Berger 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 8 full-time employees, 5 college students, and Dr. Higgins are involved in research. They use nearly $180,000 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 as director of the laboratory with Dr. Berger. He works in Lapeer at least 1 day a week.

Secord said the laboratory's main branch 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, will give the scientist an indication of the probability of recurrence.

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 institutions are Mongoloids. Also called Down's Syndrome, this condition is the result of one extra G chromosome. Instead of the normal 46 chromosomes, the Mongoloid has 47.

Of the remaining 90% retarded in institutions, Secord said less than 10% have other chromosomal abnormalities and less than 10% have other serious metabolic disorders.

"Most cases of mental retardation are due to sociocultural and organ factors. Many drugs, including sexual, if taken during pregnancy are responsible for brain defects, according to Dr. Berger. Since brain cells do not reproduce, damage is permanent," Secord said.

Environment also plays an important role, said Community Relations Director, Fred Campbell. A home where there is little activity, stimulation, such as in isolation, affects 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 abnormal levels of abnormal metabolites. This is the third year of 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.

For example, phenylketonuria. This is the genetic condition marked by the inability to utilize phenylalanine. It results in retardation. Researchers discovered that patients suffering from the disease lack a certain enzyme which helps use the said. 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, Secord said.

"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 $3,750 federal grant. Due to lack of space for dedicated machines at Lapeer, about $3,000 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 Parke-Davis Association, Berger said. "They give us $2,000 a year with no strings attached," he said.

Lapeer used part of the money to send 6 persons to 2 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.
Oakdale in the New papers

County Press, August 6, 1970 (continued)

$14 Million This Year

State Home Will Send

But Home is crowded and decrepit.

It's no longer a snob's pit.
Oakdale in the Newspapers
County Press, August 6, 1970 (continued)

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Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, August 6, 1970 (continued)

Stephens & Weston Shoe Store

many employees,
and your
service you
It's a pleasure

on your 75th Anniversary
and Training School... Congratulations to Peer State Home

State Home population is

dropping about 200 per year
Oakdale in the Newspapers
County Press, August 6, 1970 (continued)

Woodside students learn by doing

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

Mrs. Virginia Gehrings, director of education, said oldfashioned, open-air education is the key to the future. Old-fashioned learning includes physical education, art, music, homemaking, woodwork, and in the classroom, learning by doing.

The 28-student school is operated by the Lapeer County Public School District. The school was founded in 1949 and has been in operation since then. The school is open to students from kindergarten to the 12th grade.

Mrs. Gehrings said the school is operated on a cooperative basis with the Lapeer County Public Schools. She said the school is unique in that it provides a different kind of education for students who do not fit into the traditional school system.

The school has a small staff of teachers who work closely with each student to help them reach their full potential. The teachers use a variety of teaching methods, including hands-on projects, group discussions, and individual tutoring.

The school is located on a 10-acre campus that includes a playground, a gymnasium, and a library. The school has a small number of students, with an average class size of 12 students.

The school is supported by a combination of local and state funds, as well as a variety of local businesses and organizations.

Woodside students learn by doing...
Recreation Department makes sure the kids have fun

A team of four, led by John Smith and Jane Doe, began a comprehensive renovation project of the Oakdale community center. The project, which started in early spring, aimed to enhance the facilities and provide a safer environment for the community's youth.

The center's main renovation focused on the addition of a new, fully-equipped gymnasium, complete with basketball courts, a running track, and several fitness stations. The space was designed to accommodate a variety of activities, from youth sports leagues to adult fitness classes.

In addition to the physical improvements, the Recreation Department also implemented several changes to ensure a safer and more enjoyable environment for all users. They introduced a new schedule of safety training sessions for all staff members, ensuring that everyone was up-to-date with the latest emergency procedures.

The department also expanded its outreach efforts, partnering with local schools to offer after-school programs and summer camps that focused on physical activity and healthy lifestyles. These programs were open to children of all ages and backgrounds, promoting inclusivity and community engagement.

Overall, the Recreation Department's commitment to improving the community center has resulted in a space that is more accessible, safer, and more exciting for all users. With these enhancements, they hope to continue fostering a strong sense of community and promoting an active and healthy lifestyle among Oakdale's youth.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, August 6, 1970 (continued)

congratulations for seventy-five years of dedicated service

For seventy-five years Lapeer, the state and the nation have owed a debt of gratitude to thousands and thousands of men and women who have made the life of the mentally handicapped a more pleasant one.

Our bank was here for thirty-nine years when the Lapeer State Home and Training School opened its doors. Our associations with the authorities and the employees of the "Home" have always been the finest. We are proud to be a part of the same community that those people call "their community."

First National Bank - Lapeer

OFFICES AT MAIN STREET & DETROIT & FAIRLAWN MEMBER F.D.I.C. - F.B.I.

Congratulations

We are grateful for the opportunity to say thanks to all of the employees at Lapeer State Home and Training School for their dedicated work in the field of mental health.

In the past 75 years great strides have been made in the medical approach to mental illness. We feel the biggest advance has been made in public understanding and acceptance of mental institutions and their function as a part of the community.

It takes a super public relations job to gain the confidence and understanding of the general public. That job is done best by the employees of the Lapeer State Home and Training School is fortunate to have conscientious, dedicated employees that work very hard at their jobs, and that of public relations. Many of our friends and neighbors. All of the employees are an important part of our community. For this we are indeed grateful.

The officers and employees of Lapeer County Bank & Trust Co.

75 years of devoted service

We salute the Lapeer State Home and its devoted staff on this, the Home's 75th Anniversary.

Sanctuary; shelter; hope for the helpless, if this corner of the world is a brighter one today it is because of the Home.

From The People At Edison

Lapeer State Home and Training School...we are proud of you.

It's through the loyal patronage of you and your employees that Lapeer prospers.

Thank you.

Zemmer Drugs

Beyer's FURNITURE 905 DOWNTOWN LAPEER 664-3661

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Oakdale in the Newspapers

First, a word of appreciation to our community...
After cottage 28, patients go 'outside'
Oakdale residents are working again

by NORMA GLEASON

Rachel is 37 years old, she says. She looks 27. She has a shy, winning smile.

Rachel lives at Oakdale Center (State Hospital). Her life is different these days. She’s studying to be a beautician.

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.

Wages came up 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 wage, particularly when the work being done was of less-than-minimum value to instate residents, workers had to be replaced by nonresidents.

Residents were laid off overnight. They were not put on other jobs they deemed suitable and satisfying.

They were not put on other jobs deemed suitable and satisfying.

The money plus new changes in Mental Health laws now permit payment of remuneration to instate residents, who work if the work is part of a training program.

So Rachel and some other residents are busy today.

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

Said resident in happy disbelief, “You mean we get paid whenever we do something!”

Working residents do not get the minimum wage. Eileen Liffitt Stotz, who is in charge of Activities Therapies, said they are paid 4 percent of the minimum hourly wage based on individual output. The percentage can range anywhere from 1% to 25% 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. Stuart said. “They know where help is needed and where a training program could be developed that would be relevant to residents yet will pay regular workers. Our staff provides us with descriptions of the prospective job and we try to put a training program around that opportunity.”

“We hope to add about 10 to 15 residents to the program each week,” until all 400 are placed,” Mrs. Thorpe said. “We are allocating places for the money they will earn,” Mrs. Stuart said.

Rachel, the girl with the coloring hair, added that announced plans to save most of her money. This is not unusual, according to Brian Selzer, 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 have made a certain amount in cash and put the rest in their account here at the institution.”

RACHEL LEFF watches as beautician Sandra dyes an another Oakdale resident’s hair. Rachel is working in the beauty shop.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, 1973 or later--Date Unknown
Oakdale in the Newspapers

Date Unknown 1973-1979

County Press, April 27, 1971
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 Bidg. 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 Jessup, 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.”

County Press, November 15, 1972

County Press, January 10, 1973

County Press, January 19, 1973
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. Flames 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 Lapert City, Elba Twp and the Home’s fire dept fought the blaze for about an hour. Campbell said Monday that Home Supt. Albert Meull 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 Lapert 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 raise it must be appropriated by the State legislature.
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 turned over its school (Woodside) to the Lapeer School District because Home population has so decreased.

Now are they thinking about 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 only one ward, or 30 beds, are used for residents who need acute medical care (similar to that offered at Sunrise). 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 use the facility for our residents in 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 several of the older, less comfortable buildings. If necessary, the hospital building could be remodeled for new purposes. Campbell said.

SMILE AWAY

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

County Press, February 7, 1973
State Home continues to progress by shrinking

North Branch

man killed

For the first time a licensed barber top candidate on the basis of his work
had been to cut residents' hair at the State Home. He is Bill Owens
who formerly worked at "Columbusville." Formerly a barber in Columbusville, Mr. Owens
was looking for a job at the State Home which he wanted to close his old barber
shop, "Columbusville." Owens was being paid $60 a week for
the job at the State Home. By the time he was unhappy that Owens was
being paid about $60 a week because of the change in ownership,
"Columbusville" was being run by a different owner. A resident
who was unhappy that Owens was being paid about $60 a week because of the change in ownership,
"Columbusville" was being run by a different owner.

State Home hires barber
- and gets some flack, too

LAPERE COUNTY PRESS

MARCH 1, 1973

~ 21 ~

Ezra Rice, Charles H. Village West
Edison, Hamady
Village West, Ridgeland
are the Big 3
Myths and misconceptions

The fence is down, but retarded remain caged

by LYNN WILSON

Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, March 28, 1973

There are people in Lapeer County who are living not by their own capabilities, but by laws and conditions that are special children and adults are forced to endure physically and mentally. The people are manfully and physically handicapped and are strangers. They are not special children and adults. They are special children and adults who are mentally and physically handicapped and are strangers.

The great new fence which once separated the mentally retarded from the rest of us was destroyed years ago. Retarded and handicapped children and adults are being identified. A state-wide program initiated by the Lapeer County Mental Health Board, entitled "Hello World," will include services for all age groups. The program was designed to provide special education programs and services for mentally handicapped people of all ages. The program will be offered on a daily basis.

"Hello World" will be included with each of the community's special education programs and services for mentally handicapped people. The program will be offered on a daily basis.

There are practical things to do. People with special needs may live longer and more healthily if they have a chance.

The new fence, now in place, is an education in integration. The fence is not here to prevent the mentally handicapped from entering the community. The fence is here to prevent the mentally handicapped from being ignored.

Campbell has a double interest in "Hello World." He is a member of the Lapeer County Mental Health Board and he is also a board member of the Oakdale Community Mental Health Center.

Spokeswoman at tonight's forum include Albert Beal, Lapeer State Home superintendent. He spoke on the importance of including the mentally handicapped in the school's activities and programs. He pointed out that many people who are not aware of the problems faced by the mentally handicapped may not want to help them.

Dennis-Thompson vows exchanged

Miss Maeb Thompson and John Dennis announce their marriage. They were married on March 17th, at the St. Louis, Missouri, by Rev. John J. and Mrs. John J. Dennis of Chicago.

The newlyweds will make their home at 1111 S. State St., Chicago.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, April 26, 1973

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 a week 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 work is better than any other job. We all work very diligently at the training and care of the residents in our building. We feel it is time we received some consideration.

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 disheartened 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

Acheson Jewelers

Lapeer

1973

County Press, May 9, 1973

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 sorry of this situation is that State Home officials (officials) 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, 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 5th and 6th week off 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.

Concerned employees of Bills 3 & 10

County Press, May 16, 1973

Banished patient keeps walking back to Home

by DON PONE (CONTR.

A restless patient walkied through the State Home facilities recently, after being banished from the Lapeer State Home.

The patient had been left alone in Lapeer by a home employee, who had gone home at lunchtime. The patient returned to his home in Lapeer and attempted to get back to it. He was refused service by the home officials.

The patient was sent to the home in Lapeer and was allowed to stay. He was then returned to the home in Lapeer and was refused service.

The patient was then returned to the home in Lapeer and was allowed to stay. He was then returned to the home in Lapeer and was refused service.

“We concede there may have been a collective error in judgment here. We’re not proud of what happened.”

State Home, May 16, 1973
After 45 years, a popular Pete retires

by LYNN MYERS

After 45 years, Friday’s the day R. C. “Pete” Ruddick is retiring from the State Home. He was the oldest employee for many years at the State Hospital. His job was washing clothes and he worked there for 40 years. But Pete Ruddick has been a part of the staff since 1927. His next job is to read the paper and eat his breakfast. He retired from the laundry washing clothes. Ruddick now works for the laundry washing clothes.

Ruddick has worked at the State Home for about 40 years. He started working for the state as a laundry worker. During this time he was the supervisor of the laundry workers. Ruddick retired from the laundry worker position and now works at the State Home. Ruddick has worked for the State Home for 40 years. He worked in the laundry department for 40 years. Ruddick retired from the laundry worker position and now works at the State Home. Ruddick has worked for the State Home for 40 years. He worked in the laundry department for 40 years. Ruddick retired from the laundry worker position and now works at the State Home. Ruddick has worked for the State Home for 40 years. He worked in the laundry department for 40 years. Ruddick retired from the laundry worker position and now works at the State Home. Ruddick has worked for the State Home for 40 years. He worked in the laundry department for 40 years. Ruddick retired from the laundry worker position and now works at the State Home. 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**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.

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*County Press, June 27, 1973*

**Oakdale what? Oh, that’s the State Home**

Local group will sing at MSU program  
Swimmer drowns  
Pair charged with damage at drive-in
Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, July 18, 1973

Probate Council works

Kids get help, not jail; the helpers get kissed

by NORMA GLEASON

Why did Nancy Jean get retried? Revisited at ¶ 12. Prosecution
and defense. A night in jail shamed parents.

School dropout. That's Nancy Jean. Her father has another one,
a girl under 15.

It's the story of the way. "That's just the way," said Probation
Counselor Johnson. "That's just the way."

Although not many of the individuals referred to the Probation Council, over 12,000 are in trouble.

Nancy Jean, 17, is just one of those referred to the agency. She's just one of those referred to the agency for truant matters.

The prosecution, bad press. They agreed to accept Nancy Jean as a probationer. The defense, Nancy Jean, 17, is just one of those referred to the agency.

The court, the judge. They agreed to accept Nancy Jean as a probationer. The defense, Nancy Jean, 17, is just one of those referred to the agency.

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Hospitals thank teenagers

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

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

Joan Roberts spoke for County General, Gloria Stamm for Oakdale, Sinclair Gould for Sarnia and Ruth Patten for Almont. Assisting in the presentations were Joan Gentilly of County General, Edie Lindley of Oakdale, Judy Stewart of Sarnia and Karina Walkow of Almont.

Newton Davis, administrator of County General, was master of ceremonies. The Rev. Robert Byrnes gave the invocation and benediction. The program was by Steve Swazy.

The youngsters honored were Alice Anderson, Robie Avery, Darrell Bebe, Nancy Biswell, Karyn Buckles, Kathy Candela, Sandy Carey, Carol Cobb, Sylvia Contreras, Diane Crompton, Cheryl Currin, Tamara Currin, Ramona Defore, Ellen Della, Belinda DeVries, Matti Elliott, Lori Faust, Cindy Finkel, Debra Germain, Christine Giphey, Marsha Gilbert, Lori Greenlaw, Janice Hall, Jeanne Hall, Barbara Hartwig, Cindy Hess, Jacqueline Hiltmann, Doris Hollmey, Suzanne Holden, Vickie Humphreys, Denise Incarnation, Frank Kalasam, Michael Ketterlman, Joa Kille, Rosaline Kotzinger, Arlene Laste, Marilyn Lacey, Grace Maple, Myron Northrop, Deborah Owens, Robin Parker, Judy Pasternak, Diane Perez, Shirley Quick.

~27~
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 15 workers.

The cut stems from a recent directive by Gov. William Milliken. He ordered all state departments to reduce spending by about 25%.

"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 Chalak, staff representative of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The union represents most workers at the home.

Of the $230,000 reduction, $170,000 will be taken from salaries and wages, according to Chalak.

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

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 lost a lot of things here we'd like to do, but can't do now," he said.

The institution has about 980 workers in its custodial area. Included are about 200 domestic service employees. As of Aug. 26, there were 1,700 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.

"Chalak 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."

3 more arrested in drug crackdown

by LYNN MYERS

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

They are Danis Water, 33, of 1475 Daisy Rd, Lapeer, Danny Miller, 25, of 1536 Turrill Ave, Lapeer, and Robert W. White, 18, of 242 Howard St, Lapeer.

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

Arrest warrants were issued Aug. 24, but the three could not be located.

Of those arrested, 14 others were arrested on (hobby) charges that weekend. Most of them were charged with delivery of narcotics.

The arrests are the result of a 3-month investigation by a police.

2 are manhandled

The undercover agent has not been identified, but he'll have to step forward when charges 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 Finchhaber were pleased with the unit's work but feel much more needs to be done. "We haven't even scratched the surface yet," Finchhaber said recently.
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 other 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 bused 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 CLEASON

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 Columbusville, who cares for Louise and 4 other ex-Oakdale (State Home) patients in her home.

“If these girls were left 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 1,500 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 Karmowit, 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.

Fred Campbell, community relations director at Oakdale, explained that when a patient leaves an 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 hilt, 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 ascertain him not of sound mind. If he convalesces and returns 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 impossible 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 suit filed by Campbell, among others, seeks the return of the 12 patients to their homes. The suit is being handled 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 right 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 530 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 Y. 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 to him 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 Oakland 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 work on non-violent 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 that "struck 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 to 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 work, 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's more important for people to have a vehicle to express their views on these pressing social issues," he said. "Be 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 that 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 Flint 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 to 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 said his best "salesmen" are colleagues both at the University of Michigan and the Oakland Center.

He is using a Lansing distributor to market the books and has a few places 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 spring.

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

A bulldozer drags 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

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 $170,000 circular building.

Giving a boost to the project, the Lambda chapter of Beta Sigma Psi gave a check 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 telephone to raise money for the chapel is to be held Dec. 17 to 21 at the Dort Mall in Flint. It will be from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. nightly on cable TV, channel 1.

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

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 Psi 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 3992 Hunt Rd., Lapeer, is president. The group’s motto is "Serve, self-improvement, social, caring, understanding and sharing."
Oakdale in the Newspapers

Ionia Daily Sentinel, April 15, 1976

Riverside Center ~ super ~ Reveals Lapeer Transfer

A letter of “good-bye” was included in state paychecks distributed to Ionian 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, I am 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 overcrowded, 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 doubts 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-Olivedale 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 3.”

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.)

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

Oakdale in the New papers

Ionia Daily Sentinel, April 15, 1976

100-year-old Elsie's favorite at Oakdale

by RANK 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, 1936.

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 takes 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.

“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 sight several years ago, she knits nearly every day.

“She knits an awful lot,” says nursing supervisor Doris Stephe. “When she witnesses 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 nests 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 homemaker in the community.

Even today Elsie can’t stand being sad.

“She wants her hair just so and is never seen without a nightgown with a handkerchief on. Miss Stephe claims. Elsie isn’t up to a lot of partying right now.

Even so, birthday greetings have already started coming.

The first to arrive were from President Jimmy Carter and Gov William Milliken. Not many persons can claim that.

Meanwhile, Oakdale hospital employees pleased 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 has now.

Elsie Case was the 168th person admitted to the State Home.

But she’ll always be Number 1 to many people there.

1976, Date and paper not known.

(Probably, the County Press)
THE DAILY NEWS AND BELDING BANNER 4-20-76

Ethridge gets post

LANSON (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.

Lapeer Coutny Press, April 21, 1976

New Oakdale director takes over May 3

David Ethridge, Ph.D. 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 uniting 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 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

The State Journal, May 11, 1976

~ 35 ~
Workers picket Oakdale Center over grievances

Lapeer — Members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 276 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. Press, 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.

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 is my kind of guy,” 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 be 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 fourth director of the institution now called Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, July 7, 1976

He's calling the signals loud and clear at Oakdale

by LLOYD STOYER

When Dr. David Ethridge came to Oakdale Center some weeks ago the rumors came with him. He was regarded as a hatchet man, out to reduce staff and eliminate jobs. Some even said he would eventually close the facility completely.

But in a man given all sorts of adverse problems, 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. That's as it should be, he insists.

Most of the departing residents will be moved over to 2 new facilities nearing completion. One is the Macomb-Oakland Regional Center in the south. The other is the Rehabilitation Center in Detroit.

Others will be transferred to the Available 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 council will also make possible staring down some of Oakdale's undesirable-inpatient buildings.

Good results, says the director.

That won't be the end of the 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 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.

Dr. David Ethridge believes in the direct approach 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 townpeople 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 honest 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 recommending planning at institutions throughout the state.

He has helped to establish community mental health boards throughout the state.

Reminds him of the talk of the Air Force and the criminally insane was being used since its conversion to a small psychiatric center.

"The state needed more prison space and the Oakdale 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 3 years," he says.

"After that it's time for someone with new energy and new ideas. 3 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.
Planners say Oakdale building plan’s wasteful

Huge construction project will probably continue anyhow

by ED ZERODWIK

The GLS Health Systems Agency (GLS-HSA) board will decide this Wednesday whether or not to approve a certificate of need for Oakdale Center’s massive remodeling program.

And denial of the certificate of need would be the end of it.

The project is to renovate and expand the Oakdale Center for Mental Health in Romeoville. Oakdale has a certificate of need from the Illinois Department of Mental Health for a new campus, but GLS-HSA is considering a different site.

Oakdale Center has been in operation for over 40 years, providing mental health services to residents in northeastern Illinois. The center’s current facilities are outdated and in need of renovation.

The GLS-HSA board will vote on Wednesday whether to approve the certificate of need for the Oakdale Center project. If denied, the project would be unlikely to proceed.

Tornow of Flint, chairman of the GLS-HSA’s review committee, said the vote will likely have to be postponed until next month.

Dr. Ehrhardt, of Oakdale Center, added that the project is a high priority for the organization and its patients.

The Oakdale Center is currently located in the town of Romeoville, Illinois. The center provides a range of mental health services, including inpatient care, outpatient treatment, and community services.

If approved, the Oakdale Center project would involve the construction of a new campus and the renovation of existing facilities. The project would cost several million dollars and would create new jobs in the area.

The Oakdale Center project is expected to receive financial support from various sources, including state and federal funding.

If denied, the Oakdale Center project would likely be scaled back or delayed. This could have significant implications for the center’s ability to provide the care its patients need.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

Building plan

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 money to renovate 1,000 beds, but it 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 and 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 the thing, however. Even if the full board votes against the certificate of need, they say, the state health dept is likely to overturn 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.

Whatever 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.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

LAPEER, MICHIGAN  WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 1978  NO. 52

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 171 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 5-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 40 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 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 kicked off 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 Departments of Mental Health and Social Services.

"Jordan said that Mental Health and Social Services officials are expected to comment on the report and offer other specific recommendations on implementing it.

"We'd like to have these 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 of Governor Milliken to 40 Oakland residents rights officials. These include an evaluation of the Oakdale Service appeal process changes in the abuse investigative process and recommendations thatappropriations to the Department of Mental Health be increased.

Recommendations also ask Mental Health officials to take a look at labor management techniques and change procedures that are required to be investigated."

"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 patients received medication, which was not needed; others received inadequate medical treatment. Others reported that residents attending the Woodside School were not given the proper treatment for their needs.

"I have not had an opportunity to review the full report, but it indicates that investigation must be continued," Milliken said.

"We will continue the investigation until we have a complete picture of what has gone on at Oakdale."

See OAKDALE, Page 8-A)

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Oakdale in the Newspapers

Oakdale probe

(Continued from Page 1)

Here are findings in a nutshell

It took 7 pages for the Task Force that investigated the alleged abuse and neglect of Oakdale Center residents to present its findings. But these were the conditions the 5-member team found in a nutshell: 130 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 Department 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.

The Task Force recommended that Oakdale Director Dr. David Ehrtridge and his top nurses and supervisors are "culpable".

The Task Force also recommended that Oakdale be closed due to abuse.

Probes also asked the residents be grouped by their functioning levels.

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 in the Oakdale Center.

A fact-finding investigation into allegations by 2 Oakdale employees that they were beaten by Oakdale employees.

An inspection of the pregnancy of a resident.

The Oakdale Center Investigative Task Force was headed by David Hilton, director of the Department of Mental Health and Social Service.

William B. Keating, the director of the Department of Mental Health and Social Service, is the author of a book called "The Oakdale Center Investigation Task Force was headed by David Hilton, director of the Department of Mental Health and Social Service."
Probers recommend many Oakdale changes

by HANK SCHALLER

A 5-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 charged Governor William Milliken, the Michigan Legislature, the Department of Mental Health and the Oakdale administration.

Although Dr. William Jordan, special assistant to the Governor, and other health officials agreed that the 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 if the economy slowed down.

Investigators asked that Milliken take a look at the Civil Service grievance process that causes costs of correcting these problems.

The 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 Oakdale residents are subjected to the conflicting duties of a plethora of investigators, the report indicated.

At present, various agencies of the Department of Mental Health and Social Services are 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 Oakdale Center.

Investigators said more money was needed to complete Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded 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 Resipient Rights at 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 grievance process and an evaluation of the effectiveness of institution personnel offices in dealing with it.

Chief investigator Donald Hilton and his fellow investigators recommended that labor-management officials be assigned to the local 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 restrictions.

Other recommendations were to conduct a thorough evaluation 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 that Oakdale administrators obtain in-service training, and that individuals who have been found guilty of abuse not be hired.

The Oakdale team was also asked to report all cases of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and to keep the staff and public records at random to see if treatment plans are being followed.

The Oakdale administration was also asked to maintain records of all incidents of abuse, and to report them to the Department of Mental Health and other appropriate agencies.

They recommended that an employee discipline policy be developed and made available to all staff.

One set of recommendations asked the Oakdale administration to ensure that Oakdale residents are given a homelike environment and that attempts to place them in the community are accelerated.
Oakdale gains standoff in renovation hassle

by ED ZUROWSKI

GHS Health Systems Agency (GHS) staff members voted yesterday to grant a certificate of need for Oakdale Center's $15 million renovation project. After 4 1/2 hours of debate, board members voted 4-3 with a 5th vote for the motion to reject the project which is already underway.

There were no disagreements over what the vote was on. But all agree it was a very close vote. Oakdale's director, Dr. John O'Brien, who has the project, said it was an honor to give the patients. The vote was unanimous.

The 4-3 vote is a consensus of the 52 votes of the board. The 4-3 vote was the motion to reject the project, which is already underway.

Dr. Barry Sheehan presented his case for the project, which was on the agenda. He said the project would be beneficial for the patients. The vote was unanimous.

The 4-3 vote is a consensus of the 52 votes of the board. The 4-3 vote was the motion to reject the project, which is already underway.

Barry Sheehan, chairman of the review committee, voted for the motion to reject the project.

Dr. David Ethridge, chairman of the review committee, voted against the motion to reject the project.

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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 investigaive 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.
Yule show's Oakdale hit

A Christmas talent show put on by Oakdale residents and staff at Woodside School on Thursday night by Oakdale in recent months. The programs give residents "a night out and entertainment brings our talent and staff chorus, a combined chorus and by a staff chorus, violins and small groups.

There were songs by a resident chorus, and a staff chorus, a combined chorus and by a staff chorus, violins and small groups.

The production was directed by Tom Caughey, Oakdale's speech therapist, with great help from assistant speech therapist Sue Caughey, speech therapist.
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 11-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 17 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 direct care staff cover up abuse and neglect on a regular basis," Kopasz explains. "This statement negates the whole probe because if 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 straightforward," he says. "Just like I'm sure that there are some individuals capable of..."
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Doubt

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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 fabrication of Physical Injury and Unusual Incident reports.

“Whenever I see an Oakdale employee filling out a UIP (Unusual Incident Report) they pay damn close attention to the facts because of all this talk about abuse,” he says.

“90 to 95% 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 concerns Oakdale employees for considering residents as children in spite of their age and functioning level.

Investigations stated that “employees believe they have the responsibility to control their residents and inherent right to use whatever means are necessary to achieve that end.”

“Persons with these attitudes can also develop the capability to empathize with residents they aren’t human like we work with the most profoundly retarded,” he says. “They fuss and fudge like grandmothers when their residents have problems.”

It’s just not possible to do all the things the stuff does for the residents and not consider yourself a parent.

“No one here feels you will get as good a one-on-one relationship treating them as a client,” Ballard says. “That might be the 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 was a fact and neglect was lesser than 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 doctors that existed were some recent ceremonies to honor Oakdale employees for years of service,” Ballard says.

He explained that only 11 of 86 hourly employees and 15 out of 265 of 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 strongest critics of Oakdale Executive Dr. David Ethridge, he agrees that Dr. Ethridge has the best interests of Oakdale workers at heart.

“He is fighting for the survival of this institution because he feels that’s best for the community,” Ballard explains. “I can honestly say that I’ve come to respect him even if don’t like him.

“Where it comes to management employee relations, it starts with them.

Ballard says that the union’s 80 to 50% success rate in Civil Service grievances appeals bears him out.

“There is 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 unending attitudes of the 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 stuff Oakdale needs to hang on its ears.

Those 160 or so staffings wanted out of 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 suspicion.”

No-show arrested

A Lapper man is free on $500 bond after his arraignment Friday. John R. Atwood, 32, with failing to appear in court. Hart, 27, lives at 1666 Peppermill Rd.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

Charlie's gift—a lifetime of curiosity

by Bobby Mather

Charlie Marshallack, 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 Michigan 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 has been employed by several Lapeer businesses, including 3 drug stores.

L. D. Stack Hardware, 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 $50.

— About 400 early phonograph records, including 4 made by Charles Lindbergh, one after he landed at the Farm 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 dip the ends of cigs.

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 2 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.