

Green Oak woman earns general's star

Courter becomes first woman named vice commander

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CAP, making her the first woman to hold that position.

Courter said she was more humbled by the position than the gender milestone.

"Being able to serve," is what she takes pride in. "Just getting the job done. I'm very honored."

Courter's modesty aside, the CAP brass made note of the honor when its national board elected Courter to its command level during its annual August conference.

"This is history in the making for Civil Air Patrol," said National Commander Maj. Gen. Antonio Pineda. "Never in its 65-year history has a woman been selected to serve in a national command position. I'm excited for Amy and about what this means for the future of Civil Air Patrol."

The organization certainly has an admirable history. Formed in 1941 (pre-dating by a few weeks the United States Air Force that abandoned its Army Air Corps identity), the Civil Air Patrol was designed to make use of civilian aviation resources during wartime. (Ironically, the organization came into existence on Dec. 1, less than a week before the infamous Dec. 7 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.) Many heeded the call, and the CAP helped monitor American skies and was credited with sinking two German U-Boats during World War II.

The mission evolved over the years, and by the time Courter was a high school student in the Genessee County Explorer program, the high-tech, high-flying work attracted her to join CAP in 1979. She came equipped with a background in computer programming, a high school education that used things called punch-



Submitted photo

Green Oak resident Amy Courter posed for a photo before boarding a Civil Air Patrol aircraft in Oskosh, Wis., Courter joined the organization shortly after graduating from high school in 1979.

cards or rolls of yellow tape fed into a machine.

Courter maintained her CAP membership while a student at Kalamazoo College, where she majored in psychology and planned to become a teacher. She was open to adventure: Her junior year was spent studying abroad in Strasbourg, France, rounding out her education with literature, art and history courses conducted in French.

She never did get to teach, at least not in school. Courter recently retired from 20 years in the information technology field, mostly spent with global marketing firm Valassis Communications. Her career was impressive enough to make Crain's Detroit Business list of

the top "40 under 40" business leaders in 1995, and Computerworld magazine's "Premier 100 IT Leader" list in 2001.

On Sept. 11 of that year, her dedication to CAP took center stage. Then-Col. Courter was Michigan Wing Commander, and spent the day juggling two telephones, two pagers and countless questions of what should be done next.

The aircraft of CAP were the only civilian planes in the air that

day (or for weeks to come); the agency was enlisted to take overhead pictures of Ground Zero in New York — Courter said the pilot was approached by Air Force jets before identification was confirmed — and the images taken were immediately transmitted to the White House.

Courter will help lead CAP through new challenges for a new century. Working more closely with local, state and national agencies (now including Homeland Security), CAP continues serving as an all-volunteer, non-combatant response team credited with saving 100 lives a year across the country, usually from downed aircraft search-and-rescue missions. CAP's 57,000 members includes 23,000 high-school age cadets being trained for service, and Courter's long-time ambition to be a teacher is fulfilled by guiding those in training through the missions of the organization. Courter's credentials offer a promising future in that regard: During her tenure as Michigan's wing commander, the unit received all four of the Great Lakes Region's national program awards (aerospace education, counter-drug activities, disaster relief and search and rescue).

"We have people from all walks of life, skills and careers," Courter said. "I hope to belong to it for life."

For information about the Civil Air Patrol or to learn about joining the organization, visit www.cap.gov or call (800) 359-2338.

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Back to school

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new state grade-level benchmarks," Schmeichel said. "The bar has risen across the K-12 spectrum, and we're putting materials in to meet those expectations."

New materials include upgraded textbooks for the high school and middle schools and modules for the elementary schools. The modules are more diverse learning packages, including interactive and hands-on activities.

The changes reflect the state's emphasis on mathematical reasoning and problem-solving, Schmeichel said.

"These materials are heavier on reasoning and problem solving, but they do still emphasize what we have thought of as the basic skills," she said.

Teachers have undergone training during the past two years to familiarize themselves with the new emphasis, Schmeichel said. An Aug. 31 training day will help them

SCHOOL STARTS SEPT. 5

Elementary schools: Start 8:35 a.m., end 11:29 a.m.

Middle schools: Start 7:40 a.m., end 10:34 a.m.

High school: Start 7:25 a.m., end 10:14 a.m.

Sept 6: First full day of class. School day begins at the same starting times listed above.

refresh their knowledge before school begins.

The school calendar can be found all year online at www.slcs.us. Winter break is from Dec. 20 to Jan. 2, while mid-winter break runs from Feb. 19 to Feb. 23. The last day of school will be June 14.

Alyson Iott is a reporter for the South Lyon Herald. She can be reached at (248) 437-2011, or by e-mail at aiott@gannett.com.

Schools, main office numbers

South Lyon High, Principal Larry Jackson, (248) 573-8150
 Millennium Middle School, Prin. R.J. Webber, (248) 573-8200
 Centennial Middle School, Prin. Dave Phillips, (248) 573-8600
 Bartlett Elementary, Principal Stacy Cooper, (248) 573-8300
 Brummer Elementary, Principal Mary Brun, (248) 573-8520
 Dolsen Elementary, Principal Jim Soubly, (248) 573-8400
 Hardy Elementary, Principal Kim Raginia, (248) 573-8650
 Kent Lake Elementary, Principal Kim Dancer, (248) 573-8350
 Salem Elementary, Principal Dawn Felix, (248) 573-8450
 Sayre Elementary, Principal Jennifer Murphy, (248) 573-8500
 School Closing and Transportation Hotline, (248) 573-8251

For a more complete list of district numbers, visit the South Lyon Community Schools Web site at www.slcs.us.

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