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Wage freeze spawns strike

By MARY GNIEWEK

Mile and Farmington roads.

Some 25 store clerks at Arnold's Discount Drugs, 33330 W. 12 Mile, are walking the picket line in protest of a two-year wage freeze by company owner Borman's, Inc.

"It's the first time in the history of the drug industry in Detroit there has been a strike," said Duane Houck, a union representative.

Approximately 300 employees of Arnold's 34 drugstores in Michigan are on strike. They are members of AFL-CIO Local 876, retail store clerks.

The employees' 32-month contract expired Sept. 15, leaving them without medical, dental or optical insurance coverage in addition to the two-year wage freeze.

The workers went on strike at 2 a.m. Sept. 15, with only eight employees in the chain voting against the strike.

"Our wages were frozen last year, so that would make it three years without a pay increase," said Mitchell Kahn, a striking worker who has been with the company for just over a year.

"They gave their managers two raises this year," he said. "And they gave the pharmacists a raise so they wouldn't organize."

Kahn was hired at \$3.10 an hour and earned \$3.95 an hour when he went on strike.

Last week, managers were working the cash registers at the store, located in the Crowley's Shopping Plaza at 12

Mile and Farmington roads. The STORE is advertising for temporary employees. Borman's also owns Farmer Jack's supermarkets and Farm Maid foods.

The most successful part of the strike, according to the workers, is stoppage of truck deliveries.

"They're out of bread and Hostess Twinkies and soon they'll be out of beer," said Kahn, pointing to the empty shelves inside the store.

A half-dozen strikers with picket signs marched in front of the entrance, trying to shoo away potential customers. Some walked in apologetically, some defiantly and others not at all.

"Our success rate has been about 50-50," Kahn said. "Some are sympathetic; others could care less."

Every customer was treated with a chorus of jeers that Kahn hopes will keep them from coming back until the strike is settled.

The company met with the workers twice, but no meetings have been scheduled.

The workers want a cost of living raise.

"We're only asking the same Cunningham workers have — \$1.10 over 32 months with cost of living," said Houck.

"We gave them every opportunity to settle without a strike. We had no choice."

Borman's representatives refused to comment.



Workers at Arnold's Drugstores in Farmington Hills hit the pavement recently in an attempt to break a wage freeze which has been in force for the last two years. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Pending election halts decision on I-696

By JACKIE KLEIN

Southfield Mayor Donald Fracassi was called to Washington last Wednesday for what was billed as a "very important meeting" with Donald Mazzotti, deputy assistant secretary of policy and internal affairs for the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The topic: completion of the I-696 freeway.

The big powwow turned out to be another delay on the decision to fund or shelve plans for the expressway.

Transportation officials are now saying not to expect any official announcement until after the Nov. 4 presidential election.

The current roadblock is that orthodox members of the Jewish community in the 10 Mile-Greenfield area in Oak Park and Southfield say they won't be able to walk to their synagogues if I-696 cuts through the intersection.

Their religious beliefs prohibit them from driving on religious holidays. And senior citizens and young persons in the Jewish community — who have no means of transportation — also have expressed concerns that I-696 will keep

them from walking to shopping facilities and schools.

According to state Rep. Joseph Forbes, D-Oak Park, who accompanied Fracassi to Washington, about 4,000 persons living in Oak Park and Southfield are orthodox Jews. Many of them live in the 10 Mile-Greenfield area.

Forbes said he is still hopeful that a compromise can be reached. The 10 Mile-Greenfield intersection last year was rated the most dangerous in Oakland County in terms of traffic. But the ethnic implications of the proposed freeway would become a anti-Carter issue.

Television stations were well represented in Washington on Wednesday to report what was expected to be a momentous decision. After 25 years of hassling, the last leg of the I-696 expressway through Southfield and neighboring cities was finally going to be a reality.

IT WAS REPORTED last week that Neil Goldschmidt, secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, might make a final decision on I-696 in the next few days. That's what state Rep. Bill Bishop, public affairs spokesman

for the department in Washington, Bishop on Sept. 11 said: "A decision is thought to be imminent." It was implied that a decision might even be announced that week.

Fracassi returned from his short trek to Washington disappointed, disgusted and disillusioned. Forbes, Oak Park Mayor David Shepherd and John Woodford, director of the Michigan Department of Transportation, who were also on the trip, were apparently dissatisfied as well.

"I just came back from another meeting on I-696 to work out differences which are in the way," Fracassi said with a sigh. "In 1959, I'll probably still be saying we just had another meeting on the expressway. We're now observing the silver anniversary of nothing."

The state is conducting a socio-economic study of the effects of the freeway route on the orthodox community. State transportation officials are studying potential traffic counts if the Greenfield-10 Mile intersection is eliminated from the route.

"Nobody in the federal highway department would make a commitment," Fracassi complained. "The delays have

hiked the cost of the freeway from \$100 million to \$300 million in four years. The feds caused their own dilemma. Five years ago, many orthodox synagogues in the 10 Mile-Greenfield area weren't even built."

"WE CAN'T keep stopping development along the corridor of a phantom freeway," Fracassi said. "And it's jeopardizing the lives of people not to alleviate traffic conditions which cause accidents."

On a more positive note, Fracassi said federal highway officials have agreed to meet with the members of the orthodox Jewish community to try to resolve their differences. He said he's sensitive to the issue but I-696 must be built.

Fracassi would like the feds to guarantee construction of well-designed bridges or walkways over I-696 for congregation worshippers and others. This may be a possibility, he said.

Affected communities for 25 years have been exercising their rights to veto routes proposed by the state Highway Department.

At the beginning, highway officials

complained that the state would lose \$140 million in federal funds for the link if cities didn't get off their war horses and negotiate a peaceful solution.

HIGHWAY OFFICIALS warned if city bigwigs continued to drag their feet, federal bigwigs would come and say "It's too late, baby." In 1966 they argued that the federal aid program would end in 1972 and so construction must be complete by September 1971.

Many ideas for the expressway were conceived on tablecloths up in Lansing. But none were taken seriously.

Carloads of south Oakland and Macomb County leaders maneuvered through the east-west mile road traffic to the unfinished stub of I-696 in Southfield for a trip to Lansing.

Southfield, Oak Park and Pleasant Ridge wanted a route along 11 Mile Road. Lathrup Village officials threw up their hands and vehemently opposed that route, which would cut their tiny city in half.

Along about the time state highway officials were thinking they might live with a 10 Mile or an 11 Mile route if they lived long enough, officials from

Southfield, Oak Park and Pleasant Ridge formed a tri-county committee to thwart plans for a 10 1/2 Mile route.

An arbitration panel was appointed by then-Gov. George Romney to break the deadlock. The 10 1/2 Mile residents sued and contested the constitutionality of arbitration mandates. Eleven Mile Road homeowners, fearful of condemnation, knocked on doors of officials.

Angry Lathrupites formed an action committee to knock out the 11 Mile route and started court proceedings along with Pleasant Ridge. The 11 Mile route was finally arbitrated.

Environmentalists are concerned about the impact of the freeway on the Detroit Zoo in Huntington Woods. Goldschmidt has been studying that and similar snags for 18 months. A new group was recently started by Lathrup Village residents to push for withdrawal of the freeway and to urge widening of roads and beefing up of public transportation instead.

Now it's all in the hands of the federal government, where the decision is expected to be delayed until after the presidential election.

Veteran recalls days with Patton

They don't have anything over the doughboys of the Great War, but when the veterans of the 7th Armored Division get together to reminisce about General George Patton's crusade to liberate France, they tell some pretty mean tales.

Like the one about the 620-mile, 21-day hike across France.

"It was the longest drive in military history," says Glenn Fackler, who just returned from the 34th reunion of the 7th Armored Division in Williamsburg, Va.

Fackler, of Farmington Hills, has made 31 of 34 reunions and serves as secretary of the national organization, which boasts 1,800 active members. There was 8,000 men in the division.

He still has the program book announcing the first reunion at Fort Meade, Md. in 1947. Fackler and his wife, Dorothy, were among the first guests to arrive there.

There have been a lot of bashes since then.

"Our reunions have always been family oriented — not stag like other veterans groups," he said. "Hotels always give us an A-plus rating. We behave."

One of Fackler's longtime friends was a gunner who he saved from a mortar shell attack in the Ruhr pocket of central Germany.

"We both got out, but I spent six months in the army hospital," Fackler says.

outlet for those who shared common experiences in World War II Europe. The division, Patton's Third Army in France, was transferred to the British Second Army in Holland, and finally to the American First Army under General Omar Bradley during the Battle of the Bulge.

"We were known as the 'Defenders of St. Vith.' That's how history records it," Fackler said.

St. Vith was part of the Battle of the Bulge.

"We held (St. Vith) for six days," he recalled.

St. Vith was on the list of stops for the special reunion the 7th Armored Division had in 1974, when 175 veterans returned to Europe. They attended 12 formal receptions in towns they liberated in Holland, France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

The ceremonies consisted of 175 glasses of wine poured for a toast made by the mayor thanking the veterans for liberating their towns 30 years earlier.

The veterans visited four American cemeteries for memorial services, laying wreaths on graves of fallen comrades.

About 75 percent of the reunion crowd has been coming for years, but the remainder are newcomers and membership keeps growing.

"It follows a path similar to the age now where they're reading veterans publications where we advertise our reunions," Fackler said.

"It's strictly a fraternal order."



Glenn Fackler, a former member of Gen. George Patton's 7th Armored Division has attended more than 30 years of reunions of that group to remember the glory that was theirs. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Suspects nabbed after bank heist

Farmington Hills police arrested two men and one woman Friday minutes after a \$4,743 hold-up at the Detroit Bank and Trust branch at Grand River at Middlebelt.

Arrested Saturday afternoon before Judge Michael Hand were Charles Leroy Heath, 26, Albert Marshall, 30, and Darrell Marshall, 29, all of Detroit.

Heath and Albert Marshall were charged with possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony and bank robbery. Both pleaded innocent and were held on \$25,000 bond. Ms. Mar-

shall was charged with bank robbery and held on \$10,000 bond.

The robbery occurred at 11:20 a.m. when two men entered the bank. One walked to a safety deposit box window and the other to a teller's window before they jointly announced the hold-up while brandishing handguns.

They ordered the bank's 20 customers to lie on the floor while one of the suspects jumped over the teller's window and collected money in a white plastic bag from each teller's window.

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CIDER TIME
It's that time of year again when you pack the family in the car and head out for the cider mill to get the best taste that fall has to offer. To see where some are located in the suburban area, turn to Page 3A.