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1967 Was Year Of 'Waylaid' Plans As Voters Said No

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of a two part series. In this article the top news stories and events of 1967 are recalled. On Wednesday the stories that will continue into 1968 will be examined.

By SUE SHAUGHNESSY

The year 1967 might be called the year of waylaid plans in Farmington. For the Chinese it is the year of 4665, otherwise called the Year of the Ram. Farmington during 1967 had many of the characteristics of a ram. Sometimes events ran their predictable course and at other times actions were unpredictable and stubborn.

THE YEAR MIGHT BE called the year of frustrations!

For the first time in the history of the Farmington School District a millage request was defeated. The current school budget is slightly more than \$1 million in the red. A second try at incorporation in the township was defeated by the slim margin of 200 votes. The Detroit riots forced the postponement of the Founders Festival. When rescheduled, the event ran into rain and bad weather conditions. Farmington's teachers exhibited a new militancy in the contract negotiations and a proposal was not voted upon until the first day of the school year.

The proposed area study of governmental alternatives has come close to being started, but hasn't gotten underway to date.

ON THE MORE POSITIVE side, voters approved an increase in millage for the District Library. With these funds a new library will be built at 12 Mile and Farmington Rds.

A county-wide vocational education program also received voter approval.

The Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College opened its doors in September.

Federal Department Stores announced that it would construct a store in downtown Farmington. New industries—Teletrans and Omni Spectra, to name a couple—have opened their doors for business in the township.

New faces are seen on the governmental boards. Peter Klopp was named to fill Arthur Bassette's seat on the township board.

Dr. Sanford Bloomberg was elected to the vacant seat on the Board of Education when Barbara Brown retired.

Gerald V. Harrison, Farmington's Superintendent of Schools for the past 10 years, retired, and Dr. Roderick J. Smith was named to the post.

ON THE GENERAL news front, the first big story of 1967 occurred in January when 3 1/2 inches of snow were dumped on Farmington. The small veterans monument at the corner

of Grand River and Farmington Rds. was refurbished by the veterans groups and moved to a new site in the city park just west of the Masonic Temple.

On the township police beat, the scene has been bloody.

A Livonia couple, John and Frances Sorna and their son, Jules, were arrested on a charge of attempting conspiracy to murder the prosecution witness in a burglary case pending in the township. The elder Sornas were placed on probation for two years, while Jules was sentenced to two years in state prison.

John Merlo, 25, was found guilty of a first degree murder charge in the fatal shooting of his estranged wife, Sharon, in a beauty shop on Eight Mile Rd.

Dr. Ronald Clark has been bound over on a charge of manslaughter involving the death of a patient in his Grand River office. This case is currently awaiting trial in circuit court.

An ex-township policeman, Steven Dale Poynter, 24, is awaiting murder trial on the charge of shooting his wife, Mary Ann, 23, in their home on Rhonswood Nov. 10.

Thus, 1967 has been a mixed year in Farmington. Elections won, elections lost, new faces, familiar faces, sordid police cases and actual progress are all in the record.

Sometimes docile and predictable, and other times stubborn and unpredictable, 1967 was truly the Year of the Ram.



KING SIZE—This statue of Jolly Old St. Nick stands 21 feet high in front of the Bert Amo residence at 29905 13 Mile Rd. The decoration was built this year by 24-year-old John Amo "with an assist from his brothers and dad."

Ownership Of Clinic Unveiled

By FRED DELANO

A medical assistant, whose sudden death last March while employed by Dr. Ronald E. Clark is under official investigation, still is listed on the tax rolls as owner of the Farmington Township clinic, where the physician practiced medicine until his arrest Nov. 16 on a manslaughter charge.

The dead woman, Hannah Bowerbank, 35, who had lived at 1943 Hubbard, Detroit, until her death March 30, had been sole owner of the property since buying Dr. Clark's interest for \$1 in April 1962.

Previously they were listed as joint owners, having purchased the site at 30735 Grand River together for approximately \$8,400 in 1957.

THESE ARE a few of the facts gleaned from a perusal of Oakland County and Farmington Township records this week following Dr. Clark's release from jail upon meeting bond through his wife's deposit of \$15,000 in cash in the form of a certified check.

It was the Nov. 3 death of a second part-time medical aide, Grace Neil, 43, of Livonia, which triggered the investigation of the medic's operations and led to his arrest. It is charged that Dr. Clark caused Mrs. Neil's death through an overdose of sodium pentothal.

According to information provided earlier by an assistant Oakland County medical examiner, Hannah Bowerbank had worked for Dr. Clark for at least 12 years.

The same informant says Dr. Clark put his name on the Bowerbank death certificate as being the attending physician, that Mrs. Neil also was at the Bowerbank home at the time of the death, and that Dr. Clark did not report the death for three months.

Although an autopsy ever was performed, Detroit police have stated they will have the body exhumed and an autopsy performed if this is ordered by Oakland Prosecutor S. Jerome Bronson.

Early this month, Farmington Township Treasurer Elise P. Avery mailed a 1967 tax statement for \$358.23 to Hannah Bowerbank at the same

What's Inside... City Has New Radio System... 7A Church Services on New Year's Eve... 2A Clarenceville's language Program... 18 Community Calendar... 2A Exchange Student Likes Mail... 3A Snow Removal... 2A Sports... 2B Went Ads... 3-88 Women's... 4A

'WHAR' Protest Group Organizes

Quick growth to county-wide status is foreseen for a pressure group formed this week in the northwestern sector of Oakland County in an effort to bring about better rural road conditions.

The organization is called WHAR—standing for "Why Have Awful Roads?"—and, according to its chairman, there has been a spontaneous bandwagon response throughout the county since public disclosure of the group was made Tuesday.

Impetus for the organization was provided in Holly Township where nationally known outdoor writer Ben East called a meeting of residents who are disgruntled with the Oakland County Road Commission's maintenance of its road network. He was subsequently elected chairman.

"WE DIDN'T expect the response to be so big or so prompt," said East following the initial publicity accorded WHAR.

"It appears there are many residents in other townships who have just been waiting for someone to carry the ball in this matter. We are planning our next



NEW CAMPUS—The Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College opened its doors to students last September. The campus, located between Orchard Lake and Farmington Rd. just south of the I-696 expressway, features the tutorial approach to learning with small study carrels rather than large classrooms.

Vocational Education Conference Offers Placement Program Ideas

Earl Baumk, director of vocational education in Farmington Schools, returned from the American Educational Association Convention in Cleveland on Dec. 4 to 8, with renewed conviction to develop a placement program in the Farmington system as soon as it can be done.

Various experts who attended the conference emphasized the need for development of occupational training at the junior high level, a relatively new concept.

A TELEGRAM from Vice President Hubert Humphrey challenged all schools to involve themselves in summer pre-vocational programs for junior highs.

He also urged schools to become more active in "work experience" programs which are particularly valuable during the summer months when youth is unemployed.

Grant Venz, associate commissioner of the office of vocational education and authority in the field, concurred that schools must organize occupational programs at the junior high level.

better for the young student to learn to make decisions even though he might change his mind a number of times before making a final determination.

He notes Venz's statement that "Schools must assume full responsibility for helping a youngster to find his first job... to see him to his next station in life just as they do the college-bound."

CONGRESSMAN Roman C. Pucinski (Ill.), a member of the general education sub-committee of the House of Representatives, vigorously maintained before the conference audience that the U.S. is headed toward a "trillion dollar economy. If it is to remain stable, it must rely on vocational preparation."

"What's more," he insisted, "20 per cent of the gross national product must be used to support such a program."

"Vocational education is not for the meek," said the congressman. "Learning to earn is an inalienable right."

"Every youngster should have a marketable skill before graduation even if it's just for the purpose of earning his own way through college. Vocational

education is not just for those going directly to work."

In conclusion he stated, "Superior craftsmanship is imperative for giving dignity to work."

Mike Russo, director of the facilities and planning division of vocational and technical education for the U.S. Office of Education, suggested some changes in thinking. School libraries, he feels, should be readily accessible at all times to the general public.

TO RELATE this idea to Farmington, Baumk pointed out that employees of the industrial plants moving in should have access to technical books on the schools' shelves.

Russo recommends accidental treatment of floors in noisy areas such as typing rooms. This means carpeting which has so far has been resisted by school boards.

He also insisted that teachers must learn to share facilities without petty squabbling. The rooms themselves should be more flexible.

EXPRESSWAY FLIP-FLOP — A defective rear wheel was blamed for this automobile flipping over on I-696 near Orchard Lake Rd. last weekend. The driver, Jean Smalley, 20, of New Boston, and her only passenger, Nancy Faessler, 20, of Southfield, escaped without serious injury. No other vehicles were involved in the accident.