

editorial opinion

Police deserve honor for job well performed

Editor's Note: City of Farmington Public Safety Director Dan Byrnes authored the following piece about police officers to commemorate Police Memorial Day May 15. We think it should be shared with the general public.

I think it's time again to recognize the contributions that law enforcement officers make to our community.

WE ARE REMINDED daily by citizens of our obligation to them—it is time for our citizens to recognize their obligation and their responsibility to good law enforcement, to recognize our efforts and sacrifices to serve them in a professional and efficient manner.

Police officers make mistakes. They're not infallible. They're not mechanical robots, programmed to perform to perfection. They are human beings, subject to the same human frailties as others.

However, our community and the nation can take pride in the fact that, despite their very human deficiencies, police officers are an extremely dedicated group of individuals, ready and willing to make any sacrifice they may be called upon to serve others.

They work long and rigorous hours on rotating

shifts, all night stakeouts that can last a week, working Saturdays, Sundays and holidays when others are at home with their families.

They rub elbows with society's elite: Addicts, thieves, drunks, liars, cheats, con men, child molesters and parents who just don't care.

They must deal with the heartbreak of homeless kids, injured kids, sick kids, dying kids and dead kids. They see lonely old people that nobody wants or cares about, victims of homicide, suicide, robbery, rape, assault, and the families and loved ones of the victims.

And while dealing with the scum of society, the victims of crime, the heartbreak of seeing the worst in all of us, they must suffer the abuse of being called a pig, a fascist, a cop, a flatfoot, the fuzz, the heat—everything but a policeman.

He's shot at, assaulted, spat upon and verbally abused while attempting to do his job serving a community which all too often only has contempt for him and his efforts.

Being a policeman is an endless, glamorous, thankless job that must be done. One that do it deserve to be recognized for their efforts, even if it is only one week out of the year.

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TRANSPORTATION

Your Choice for the Future

In Southeastern Michigan, transportation planning culminated in 1975 with the adoption of the 1990 Regional Transportation Plan — a recommendation for a combined highway and public transit system from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

You may have been involved when that plan was developed. Now is the time to begin implementing major portions of that plan. And now is the time for citizens to become involved again in their transportation future.

The Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) has begun to study public transit alternatives within the framework of the 1990 Plan. Through this study SEMTA will eventually recommend types of vehicles, systems and routes that will provide regional transportation service throughout Southeastern Michigan over the next 15 years.

What can you do? You can become familiar with this important work and its purpose by attending:

A CITIZENS INFORMATION MEETING

Thursday, May 13, 7 p.m.

Oak Park Community Center

14300 Oak Park Boulevard, Oak Park

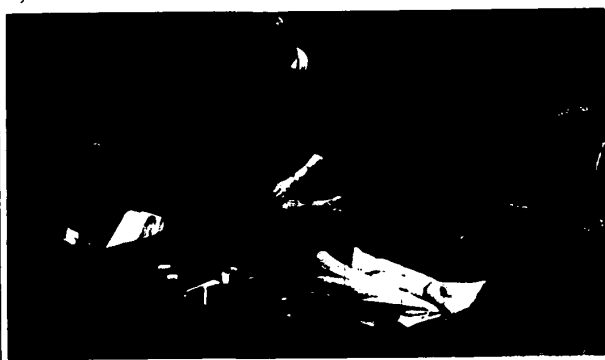
At this meeting — the second in a series — you will learn about the work that is being performed on transit alternatives and you will learn how you can influence that work which will take place through 1976.

The meeting also will be an opportunity for you to express your concerns about public transit alternatives as officials of SEMTA move toward a set of final choices for a regional transit system.

For more information on this meeting contact SEMTA, 962-9800.

SEMTA is an operating authority providing public transportation throughout the seven counties of Southeastern Michigan.

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211 Fort Street, West
Detroit, Michigan 48221
(313) 962-9800



Home care. Another way to save on health care.

Some hospital patients can complete their recovery at home—where they can be with their families. The cost is less than in-hospital care. And, of course, less time is spent in the hospital, which also saves money.

Cost-cutting home care with a visiting nurse is a benefit available in many areas under your Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan contract. Another cost-cutting benefit is same-day surgery that lets you check into a hospital, have surgery and return home the same day. A wide range of outpatient benefits also helps reduce the need for expensive hospitalization.

Inflation and other factors are increasing health-care costs at an alarming rate. If we are to maintain the high standard of care all of us want and expect, all of us—not just doctors and hospitals but all of us who use these services—must help save in every way we can. Ask your doctor how you can help.



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield**
of Michigan

Let's all save for health's sake.

The Stroller... Vocational training

By W. W. EDGAR

Now that more and more schools—even at the high school level—are turning to vocational training, The Stroller often wonders if the young fellows of today appreciate what is being done for them.

He wonders if they realize they no longer have to spend four years in the neck and grease of the shop before they earn their right to be called mechanics. He wonders, too, if they realize the sore hands and heated thumbs they are being spared now that they can learn the trade in the confines of a school work shop.

IT WASN'T that way in the old days for the young fellows who could not look forward to a few years in college after leaving high school.

Young fellows, like The Stroller, whose families couldn't afford the luxury of sending their children to college, had to seek employment in the shops and work for what now would be considered slave wages—with long hours, too.

When the day came that The Stroller had to leave school—his mother insisted that he learn a trade, no matter in what category just so he would be a tradesman—it was a difficult choice to make. Unlike most young lads who go on to college now, knowing just what courses they plan to take, The Stroller decided he would join some of his young pals in the machine shops.

It just so happened that the Atlas Portland Cement Co. in the little town next to us was enlisting apprentices, so there was no difficulty getting located. What a course it turned out to be!

When he reported the first morning at 8:30 after a half hour ride, he was handed a hammer and cold chisel and escorted to a group of cast iron gears. There he was told to chip the burrs off the edges of the teeth.

It seemed simple, but try sitting on a box all day and missing the hammer more often than you hit it toward the end of the long day. By the time the 10-hour shift ended, The Stroller's hands were bleeding and his back ached. That was only part of the pain. He had to leave home at 5:30 a.m., pay 10 cents car fare and carry his lunch. All that earned him 50 cents a day. Imagine that, 50 cents an hour.

To make matters worse, he had to remain a gear chipper for most of the first year. He didn't get a chance to run a machine for nearly 15 months. When that chance came, it was on a simple, little drill press.

It was tough going, but that was the path he had to travel if he wanted to learn the trade. It wasn't until his third year—and a raise to 80 cents an hour—that he got to handle a major machine.

IF A FELLOW didn't like that, there

was only one alternative—a course in the Scranton Correspondence School where you were taught by mail.

One of the multi-graduates reported to the cement company shop one morning ready for work. He hired in new coveralls and displaying a new tool box, he was assigned to a large lathe next to The Stroller. He was doing well, lining up the job and putting a good edge on the cutting tool, but he kept walking up and down and staring at the machine.

Asked if he needed any help, he asked, "How do you start the machine?" I learned the trade by mail, but they didn't tell me how to start the machine.

Young fellows don't have any experiences like that today. This was impressed on The Stroller some time ago when he was given a tour of the vocational shops at Schoolcraft College. He saw better lathes there than were available when he was an apprentice. And the shop was nice and clean, a far cry from the mark and grease of the old-time shops.

That's why he keeps wondering if the young fellows of today really appreciate the opportunities being offered them in the classrooms of today's schools. At least you aren't handed hammer and cold chisel and given an introduction to cast iron gears with sharp, edges on their teeth.

At Belle Isle's 200 miler

Marathon offers adventure

A great free-wheeling adventure is only five days away.

And the Farmington Free Wheeler has been preparing himself for this event for the past three weeks, taking off on several quickie tours while getting his body and bike in shape for the 18th annual Poppy-Ola "Wolverine 200" bicycle marathon on Belle Isle in Detroit May 15 and 16.

That's when more than 8,000 bicyclists attempt to complete 40 laps of the park's five-mile course in less than 34 hours.

Remembering last year's weekend reminds this Free Wheeler of several biking adventures and mishaps, including tales of competition-racing friends who never made it more than 30 miles, and other tales of sore knees and aching muscles.

But for the Free Wheeler, it is a bike outing he looks forward to with anticipation each year.

The event starts early Friday night as riders from all over Michigan and surrounding states head for the island.

The marathon weekend is the only time Detroit permits overnight camping in the park and hundreds of tents and campers are cramped on the island.

A COMMUNAL spirit exists for three days as riders of all levels gather to share their experiences.

Until the 9:30 a.m. Saturday starting time, riders continuously arrive and set up tents that will serve as their pit areas during the marathon.

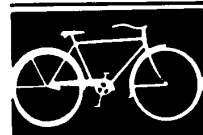
I always dreamed of having several friends join me camping on the island Friday night. Then I pictured having beautiful women ready at my pit stop to rub me down and feed me energy food to keep me going for 200 miles.

Whether that dream comes true remains to be seen but at least the Free Wheeler is making plans.

Last year during the marathon, I met riders from as far away as New York and as close to home as two blocks away.

Just riding around Belle Isle is an adventure in itself any day, but add more than 8,000 riders side by side and it makes for even more excitement.

The marathon—it's not a race—starts by



FREE WHEELING
with ron garbinski

the old casino near the south end of the island. From there, riders get a skyline view of downtown Detroit as they travel around the east side of the island with Windsor and the river to their right.

Free-wheeling this section of the island can be difficult at times, especially if there is a strong head wind coming off Lake St. Clair.

But with the more experienced riders breaking the wind in front of you, the ride becomes easier.

AFTER TURNING at the north end of the island, riders head into the woods for about two miles of shade from the sun which bicyclists experienced last year.

Touring the middle of the park, passing the sun, flower gardens and camp area, the riders get a lap stamp and start all over.

Last May, several of the Free Wheeler's friends ventured to the park from out of town but returned home within hours of the marathon's start.

As they lapped the island for about the third time, these racing enthusiasts were involved in a chain reaction pile up which wrecked their front fenders and caused minor damage to the rest of their bikes.

With their machines in need of repair, they decide to head home.

As riders continue to complete lap after lap, knees begin to ache and tiredness takes over, especially under a hot noon sun.

One cure for these muscle pains, this Free Wheeler thought, would be to start counting the number of strokes his legs made pedaling around the island.

He tried it several times—between conversations with other riders—but lost count after 607.

For those who don't come equipped with food or refreshments, a food service is provided and open all night during the 34-hour marathon.

RIDING AT NIGHT around the island is an opportunity bicyclists shouldn't miss. With cool breezes coming off lake and the temperatures dropping after 9 p.m., riders should dress in warmer clothes before continuing their 200-mile adventure.

The island and skyline offer a beautiful view at night as freewheelers steam down the river.

Even at night during the marathon weekend, people wander the island, walking and talking with other riders.

It's an atmosphere that probably would be most people's notion of Belle Isle after dark.

Besides being another free-wheeling adventure, the Belle Isle marathon is an inexpensive, fast-filled reward for anyone who enjoys riding a bike.

Since it is not a race, riders can start when they like and pedal as far as they wish.

Awards are given to riders who finish certain distances within set time limits. Special awards are presented to bicyclists in various categories.

After you register for the marathon and begin adding up those laps, be sure to wave to the Free Wheeler as he cruises past wearing his baseball hat backwards.