

Wednesday, October 1, 1969

# Who Should Clean Up A Rat-Infested Ditch?

By WYLIE GERDES

Homeowners in the Westlake Subdivision in southeast Farmington Township have a ditch they'd like someone to claim. The ditch has rats, muskrats, stagnant water and lots of children playing in it.

The ditch also has homeowners on both sides of it angry because they can't discover who is responsible for maintaining it.

FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP has, on occasion, claimed the ditch is the responsibility of the adjoining property owners. In answer to a television newsman's question, however, a township official says the township will study the situation. The answer seemingly indicates the township has an interest in the four-block long ditch.

When homeowners voiced plans to fill the ditch, the same officials said the ditch is a 'natural waterway' and is under the control of the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Army Corps of Engineers told the homeowners the 'natural waterway' must be an Oakland County drainage ditch. The Army controls no waterways in Oakland County, the Army told homeowners.

Oakland County Drain Commission engineers told The En-



THE EVIDENCE — Here's one rat rendered useless, unable to spread infectious diseases such as rabies or the bubonic plague. The trap was set by Mrs. Phil Stewart who says there are a number of rats along the entire length of the ditch.

terprise and Observer the 'drainage ditch' doesn't appear on official county maps, so it is not under their control.

The engineers speculated the subdivision's developers or the adjacent property owners might be responsible.

WHOEVER FINALLY admits responsibility for the ditch will have quite a job cleaning it up. The ditch runs east-west a couple of blocks north of Tuck Rd. It's at least six feet deep the

majority of its course and about 20 feet wide.

Both sides of the ditch are tightly lined with chain-linked fences of adjoining homes. Where streets cross the ditch, a two-foot-high guard rail has been installed.

Weeds and rocks border green pools of water behind the neat lawns and houses.

The Enterprise and Observer first heard of the ditch when Mrs. Mary Stewart of 2250 Tuck and Mrs. Emilie Olweiss of 2228 Tuck reported seeing animals which they thought might be rats in the ditch.

BARRY WYATT of the Oakland County Health Dept. said he would recommend poison to combat rats but couldn't do anything about muskrats. Several homeowners along the ditch reported spotting muskrats in

the ditch.

The health department stayed out of the controversy until Mrs. Phil Stewart of 30238 Astor trapped a rat in her backyard. Mothers' voices complaining about the ditch got a little more insistent after word of the trapped rat spread.

Mrs. Charles Kelso of 30080 Astor said she had seen children swimming in the ditch this spring, a fact mentioned by other residents.

Mrs. Stewart produced photographs showing youngsters using a small plastic boat in the water-filled ditch after a rain.

MRS. STEWART checked through the township, Oakland County, and the Army Corps of Engineers without learning who was responsible for cleaning the ditch.

Then she called in television newsmen who extracted the survey statement from Bill Taylor of the Farmington Township building inspection department. Taylor could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, the health department ordered three of the homeowners who complained about the rat menace to build rat walls around their garbage storage areas. They also placed poisons along the ditch. Mrs. Stewart says she increased the number of traps around her backyard.

Mrs. Stewart and other homeowners who live along the ditch said children coming and going to school drop food into the ditch which apparently attracts the animals. Most expressed reluctance to attempt cleaning up themselves.

As Mrs. Stewart expressed, "Would you send your husband into that rat-infested ditch?"



R. T. THOMPSON



TIM RICHARD

## Publisher Promotes 2

Two major editorial department appointments at Observer Newspapers, Inc. were announced today by Publisher Philip H. Power.

Richard T. Thompson was named Executive Editor, with overall responsibilities for advance planning, coordination and editorial policy development for the six newspaper group.

Tim Richard was appointed News Editor, with responsibilities for directing the day-to-day news and editorial activities of Observer Newspapers.

Thompson previously was Managing Editor and Richard Assistant Managing Editor.

The appointments were part of a series of editorial staff changes announced today by Power. (See related story on this page.)

"I HAVE ABSOLUTE confidence in Tommy Thompson and Tim Richard," Power said in making the appointments.

"Both men are outstanding newsmen, with many years of experience and many state and

national awards to their credit. Both men live in our circulation area and therefore bring to their working long years of local knowledge and insight."

"Both have participated recently in developing the editorial staff of these newspapers, which has won more awards in the past two years than any other newspaper group in Michigan," Power said.

"TOMMY Thompson will be involved in the long-range planning and coordination end of our organization. He will be developing new features, searching for new talent and coordinating the editorial department with other departments in our organization."

"Tim Richard will be directing daily news coverage, overseeing production, making story assignments and suggestions, and handling the complex meaning of people, stories and things which make up a newspaper," Power explained.

The new appointments do not effect local editorships or responsibilities of any local ed-

itors of Observer Newspapers, Power added.

THOMPSON was born in New Kensington, Pa., attended high school in Warren, O., and graduated from Ohio State University in 1933.

He was sports editor of the Warren (O) Tribune Chronicle for 13 years, and then joined the Chicago Tribune sports staff. He then advanced to Executive Sports Editor of the Detroit Free Press, where he also worked on the copy desk and as day wire editor.

He became editor of the Plymouth Observer in 1955, and then became assistant to Editor Mrs. Mira Chandler, after the death of her husband, Paul, who was Editor and Publisher of Observer Newspapers.

He later was appointed Managing Editor of Observer Newspapers when Philip Power purchased the group, and he has held that post until his present promotion.

He and his wife, Evelyn, live in Redford Township.

TIM RICHARD, 33, joined the Observer Newspapers in January of 1967 as editor of the Farmington Enterprise & Observer, then moved into the central news office when the new Sunday edition was launched.

Raised in northwest Detroit, he earned degrees in economics and business administration from the University of Michigan. He held reporting and editing posts with the St. Joseph Herald-Press and Kalamazoo Gazette from 1959-66.

Richard's list of honors as a newsman includes two national awards (editorial and feature writing) from the Suburban Press Foundation, six statewide news writing prizes (including three firsts) from the Associated Press, and honors for "distinguished reporting of public affairs" from the American Political Science Assn.

He also gave Observerland exclusive local coverage in stories and pictures at the 1968 Republican National Convention. He and his wife, Nancy, reside in Livonia.

## Plan October Trash Pickup

The special trash pickup campaign conducted by Farmington Township will begin Monday, Oct. 6, and continue until Oct. 27.

During this period, township residents may put out large items to be picked up, such as appliances, furniture, tires, lumber and old engines.

Studio couches or davenport must be broken down before they will be picked up.

The pickups will be on the regularly scheduled days for garbage pickup.

The program was started last May through the combined efforts of the Township Beautification Committee, Building Inspector Ralph Bell, Supervisor Curtis Hall and the Township Board.

After the October drive has ended, there will not be another pickup of large items until May.

## Editor Hoenshell Moves To Lansing

Publisher Philip H. Power today announced the resignation of Don Hoenshell as editor of Observer Newspapers, Inc.

Hoenshell will return to the Lansing area to develop a group of newspapers in the suburbs of the Capital City.

He was editor of the Livonia Observer briefly in 1957 before becoming executive editor two

years ago.

"We are, of course, very sorry to see Don go," said Power. "His work for us -- though interrupted twice by serious health problems -- has been outstanding."

"He has helped us train and develop a news staff that has won more editorial awards than any other newspaper group in Michigan over the past two years -- and which will progress to even greater heights in the future."

"SINCE MARCH, Don has been living in Lansing, and to commute more than 150 miles each day is a tough grind. His new position with Panax Corp. will enable him to work in Lansing and around the state capital, which has been an area he has enjoyed for more than 20 years as a newspaperman."

HOENSHELL SAID:

"I believe in what Phil Power is doing and in his plans for the future."

"It is with sorrow that I leave the newspapers, the people who staff them and the friends in the areas they serve."

HOENSHELL came to the Livonia Observer in April of 1957, after serving two years as director of the Legislative Service Bureau in the capitol.

He started in the newspaper business in 1941 as a sports writer for the Alpena News, before earning a bachelor's degree at Michigan State University.

THE  
FARMINGTON  
ENTERPRISE  
& OBSERVER

Emory Daniels, Editor  
Published every Wednesday  
and Sunday  
Newsstand ..... per copy, 10c  
Carrier ..... monthly, 30c  
Editorial Office  
23023 Farmington Road  
Farmington, Mich.  
Phone 474-6225

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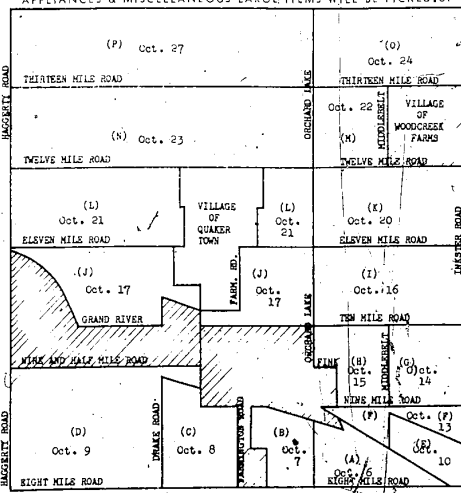
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### FARMINGTON TOWNSHIP OCTOBER SPECIAL

#### TRASH PICK-UP SCHEDULE

APPLIANCES & MISCELLANEOUS LARGE ITEMS WILL BE PICKED UP



REGULAR MONTHLY PICK-UP SCHEDULE

A. FIRST MONDAY  
B. TUESDAY AFTER 1st MONDAY  
C. WEDNESDAY AFTER 1st MONDAY  
D. THURSDAY AFTER 1st MONDAY  
E. FRIDAY AFTER 1st MONDAY  
F. SECOND MONDAY  
G. TUESDAY AFTER SECOND MONDAY  
H. WEDNESDAY AFTER SECOND MONDAY  
I. THURSDAY AFTER SECOND MONDAY  
J. FRIDAY AFTER SECOND MONDAY  
K. THIRD MONDAY  
L. THURSDAY AFTER THIRD MONDAY  
M. WEDNESDAY AFTER 3rd MONDAY  
N. THURSDAY AFTER 3rd MONDAY  
O. FRIDAY AFTER THIRD MONDAY  
P. FOURTH MONDAY

NO PICK-UP AREA