

Umpire claims he never missed a call in 50 years

By DENNIS O'CONNOR

The recent celebration of Independence Day was a special date for Earl Gray. It marked the start of the 50th season of baseball umpiring for the Plymouth resident.

Yet, with all those years under his belt, the 82-year-old Gray will tell you he's never missed a call.

"As far as I'm concerned, I've never missed a call. But no one's that perfect," Gray said with a smile.

In his fifty years of umpiring, he must have called a lot of close plays. Although Gray almost went blind in his right eye from scarlet fever at age three, he never wore glasses until he was 65.

AND HIS PHILOSOPHY on umpiring hasn't changed in his half-century of experience.

"I always figured when I walked out on the field, I was a disinterested party. It didn't matter to me what town or city I was in. There's only one person you have to please and that's yourself. You're always on your own."

The retired Wayne County construction worker was a Plymouth High School student in the 1910s.

He began his umpiring career as a side job on weeknights and weekends. His first contest, between C.S. Smith

and Plymouth Class A (they didn't have high school teams in those days) was played at the old Burrough's Field in Plymouth in 1929.

From there, he worked in the Inter-County Baseball League, the Michigan-Ontario League, and now is a member of the Suburban Umpires Association.

IN 1947, GRAY organized the Suburban Umpires Association, serving as the secretary-treasurer for more than 60 umpires. At one time, Gray handled a bank roll of as much as \$28,000 a year, as his umpires worked high school and semi-pro baseball, men's fast-pitch softball, and boys little league games in western Wayne County and northern Oakland County.

Gray gave up his secretary-treasurer position in 1973 but continued to officiate games. In fact, just this last spring, Gray umpired in Lincoln Park, Saline, Ann Arbor, Farmington, Livonia, and Ypsilanti, just to name a few.

Last spring was the first year Gray missed umpiring in the Plymouth-Canton area. A different umpire association was hired for Salem and Canton contests.

Gray once was a baseball player himself but he suffered arm trouble when he was young.

AFTER A BRIEF stint managing a baseball team in the 1930s, Gray became involved as an umpire, knowing it would be just a hobby.

Gray said the game has changed a lot in terms of coaching where he sees more professionalism from men who teach the high school players. And he never resents a coach who questions a call.

"These coaches are hired to teach the kids," Gray said. "It never bothered me if coaches came out and questioned a close decision. As long as they handled themselves as professionals and forgot about the play after it was done—and play the game from then on. I've only thrown out one high school coach—somebody from Dearborn years ago."

ANOTHER CHANGE in the game was the attire of an umpire. In the 1920s and 1930s, umpires wore regular suits and ties for every game. Later on, the clothing switched to a striped shirt, much like that of a football or basketball referee. Only recently, Gray said, the umpire's clothing switched to the light blue shirt and dark slacks that umpires now wear.

And the pay was quite different, too. "We used to take home \$6 for two games—18 innings—in the Michigan-Ontario League. Now we get \$17 for a high school game and \$9 or \$10 for a softball game." Both those leagues play seven innings a game.

GRAY ALSO said the fans were

more kind in the early days. "We didn't have too many problems," Gray said. "We respected the umpires more in those days than now, in terms of teaching. The umpires had a more protection from the fans."

Gray admitted, however, he was involved in an incident in the Inter-County League in 1942 when a fan at a

Belleville-Garden City game didn't like a call, jumped out of the stands, and knocked him down—resulting in a police escort after the game.

GRAY HASN'T umpired for about two months now because of some health problems, but he should be ready to call those balls and strikes again by the end of this month.

He enjoys the time he has for himself and Edna, his wife of 53 years, after retiring as secretary of the organization.

But he'll never retire from his work on the diamond. Like Gray said, "I don't umpire for need, I umpire for the 'love of the game.'"

Valedictorian gets scholarship

Deborah Cecchini, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Cecchini, 2701 Mingwood Lane, Farmington Hills, has been awarded a presidential scholarship to Valparaiso University in Indiana.

College of Nursing at Valparaiso, which is located southeast of Chicago.

As a senior at Latheran High School West, Ms. Cecchini has been a member of the National Honor Society and the student council. She was her class valedictorian and also played on the all-conference volleyball team.

Ms. Cecchini will be enrolled in the

CITY OF FARMINGTON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS SUMMARY - JULY 3, 1978

A Regular Meeting of the Farmington City Council was called to order at 8:00 P.M. Monday, July 3, 1978 by Mayor Richard L. Tupper, in the Council Chambers, 2900 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan.

Councilmen Hucker, Hartsock, Tupper and Yoder were present. Councilman Bennett was absent.

City Manager Deadman, Director Byrnes, Attorney Kelly and Clerk Viane were also present.

Minutes of previous meetings were approved. Minutes of other boards were received.

LUIGI MILANI, Boys' State Representative, reported to Council regarding his experiences at this year's Wolverine Boys State.

Council received a letter from Mr. Steven West, Chairman of the Board, Federal's Inc.

Council supported the position of the Inter-County Highway Commission regarding the M-275 Freeway in Oakland County.

Council instructed the City Manager Richard L. Tupper, in the name of the City of Farmington, Michigan, to investigate the possibilities of leasing approximately 200 sq. ft. of space in the Farmington Municipal Building to Keep Michigan Beautiful, Inc.

Council set July 29, 1978 from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M. to meet with residents in the Downtown Center during the Farmington Festival.

Council denied the request from the Oakland Farmers Market for a Temporary Permit to allow outdoor sales.

Council tabled the request from Kelly McShane for a mini-park at Locust Drive and Shawansee.

Council granted a sign variance to the Hitchcock Gallery of Homes, Inc.

Council authorized the City Manager and City Clerk to enter into a contract with the Michigan State Highway Commission to upgrade the warning and regulatory signs on roads and streets within the City of Farmington.

Council allocated an expenditure not to exceed \$1,000.00 to participate in the Home-Mark Service and Chore Service programs to be provided through the Farmington Hills Department of Parks and Recreation.

Council tabled a decision on the adoption of Ordinance C-431-78 regulating traffic on Thomas Street.

Council established a Public Hearing to review the Site Plan for the proposed Housing for the Elderly for 8:00 P.M. August 7, 1978.

Council approved the Final Plat for the Tall Pines Subdivision on Drake Road south of Grand River and authorized the City Clerk to sign the plat on behalf of the City.

Meritly Bills were approved for payment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 P.M.

RICHAED L. TUPPER, MAYOR
NEDRA VIANE, CITY CLERK

Published: July 13, 1978

NOTICE CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS

Bids are being accepted for rehabilitation of two houses in the City of Farmington Hills 312-7-6.

Specifications may be picked up at the Farmington Hills Administrative Center, 3155 West 11 Mile Road from the Department of Public Services Office.

State licensed General Contractors only. Bids will be accepted until July 25, 1978. Bid opening will be at 10 A.M. The city reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

FLOYD A. CAIRNS, City Clerk

Published: July 13, 1978

LIVONIA BUILDING MATERIALS CO.

12770 Farmington Rd. S. of Schoolcraft Rd
937-0478 421-1170

DO-IT-YOURSELF SHOWERMATE TUB KIT
In Stock:

Plain White.....\$59.95
Colors.....\$69.95
Gold Travertine.....\$79.95
White Marble.....\$79.95

FORMICA
30" x 96"
36" x 96"
IN STOCK, WHITE AND 6 OTHER PATTERNS
70¢ SQ. FT.

WALLBOARD (Dry Wall)
4x8 4x10 4x12
3/8" 3.22
1/2" 3.47 4.41 5.29
OTHER LENGTHS IN STOCK UP TO 4 x 14

MON.-FRI. 8-5 SAT. 8-12

NFWB Expos aim for state championship

The Federal Major Expos are aiming for their second state championship. By beating the Astros, the Expos remained the only unbeaten team for the second half-season.

The Expos pounded 10 hits while beating the Astros, 14-5. Mike Toner was 2-3 for the Astros.

The Athletics beat the Orioles, 16-5, behind the hitting of Geof Saham, Fran Glasser and Dan Sachs. Bobby Kula, who was called up from the Minors for this game, had two base hits for the winners. Geoff Lipsky had three base hits while Nick Murrucchi and Rick Reitman each had one hit for the losing Orioles.

The Brewers outdid and outscored the Padres in a 21-15 slugfest. Starting for the powerful Brewers were: Scott Pegg, 4-5; Don Levine, 3-4 including a home run and John Kretz, 2-3.

The Mets outlasted the Rangers, 8-7. Mark Miller had two base hits, three RBIs and scored the winning run for the Mets. Nick Scavone had 4 bases-loaded double. Bob Ruppli and John Lock had more than 34 for the Rangers.

RONALD KUPERSMITH and Bob Mitchell led the unbeaten

American T-Ball Tigers to a victory over the Indians. The White Sox also defeated the Indians before the bowing to the Angels, 19-16. Tono had a home run in the Angel game.

The Royals won two games, beating the Blue Jays, 9-5, and the Yanks, 24-14. The Yanks won a close one over the Twins, 21-13. The Angels edged the Red Sox, 15-14. Angels David Gregorson and Mike Puzar were the pitchers, while the runs were scored by Corky D'Ascenzo, Dave Minihmet, Ron Slampak, Jim Conrad and John Conrad.

At the same time, the White Sox won their first game of the second half-season by beating the Twins on the combined pitching efforts of Tom Givoux and Jon Weisberg.

The Twins lost close games to the White Sox and Royals. Ricky Bartholomew, Jay Wilner and Andy Wiener continued to perform the pitching for the Angels.

The Indians came back from their defeat to the Tigers by beating the Angels. The Indian pitchers were Mark Kessa and Ed Collins. The Royals hung on to a second place tie by defeating the Red Sox and Twins in exciting games. Brian McDanel, Paul Grant and Jim Waak performed the pitching, which kept the Royals in the games.

The Red Sox remained in fourth place in spite of

NFWB baseball league standings

NFWB AMERICAN MINOR LEAGUE			
TEAM	W	L	PCT.
Tigers	10	1	.909
Indians	9	1	.818
Royals	8	1	.889
Red Sox	7	1	.875
Yankees	6	1	.857
White Sox	5	1	.833
Twins	4	1	.800
Angels	3	1	.750

Tigers 7, Indians 2
Royals 11, Red Sox 6
W side Sox 13, Twins 9
Yankees 21, Angels 19
Tigers 16, Yankees 5
Indians 14, Angels 7
Royals 8, Twins 6

AMERICAN T-BALL			
TEAM	W	L	PCT.
Tigers	7	0	1.000
Angels	3	1	.750
Royals	3	1	.750
White Sox	2	1	.667
Yankees	2	1	.667
Red Sox	1	1	.500
Twins	1	1	.500
Blue Jays	0	3	.000
Indians	0	3	.000

FEDERAL MAJORS			
TEAM	W	L	PCT.
Expos	4	0	1.000
Athletics	3	1	.750
Padres	3	1	.750
Astros	3	1	.750
Brewers	3	1	.750
Mets	2	1	.667
Rangers	1	1	.500
Orioles	0	3	.000

THE PLUMBERY
HOME CENTER
BY OAKLAND HARDWARE CO.

All Your Plumbing and Heating Needs for That "Do-It-Yourselfer"

FREE Advice on How-to-do-it-yourself

2775 Haggerty Rd. Phone
Walled Lake 669-2022
Mon.-Fri. 8-9
Sat. 8-8; Sun. 9-6

Have you entered the Color Photo Contest?
(You could win \$100 in photo equipment)

Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

SAVE \$4.00

MINNESOTA PAINTS

BEST PRICE THIS YEAR!
LATEX FLAT WALL PAINT

- WARRANTED ONE COAT
- WASHABLE & STAIN RESISTANT
- FADE RESISTANT; NON YELLOWING
- 30 POPULAR COLORS

\$6.99 gal.

NOW THROUGH SAT. \$10.99 BEST QUALITY

PAN & ROLLER COMBINATION \$4.89

FORMICA BRAND laminated plastic

STOCK SIZES AND COLORS ONLY. NO SPECIAL ORDERS

69¢ EACH

TOMATO STAKES 9¢ EACH

All prices Cash-N-Carry

WALLED LAKE: MON.-FRI. 8-6, SAT 8-5, SUN 10-3
HOWELL: MON.-FRI 8-6, SAT 8-5

HAGGERTY LUMBER & SUPPLY CO.

2055 HAGGERTY, WALLED LAKE, (313) 824-4551 OR 356-6166
227 N. BARNARD, HOWELL, (517) 546-9320