

Woman wants to correct official misspelling

By James Radebaugh
staff writer

Elaine Calder, a petite elderly woman in jogging shoes, wants the world to know something about Halsted Road — namely, how it's spelled.

The 34-year West Bloomfield resident says Oakland County got it wrong years ago when the road commission spelled the road "Halstead" on signs posted along the partly unpaved road that stretches from Walnut Lake Road south into Farmington.

Ever since, the error has been repeated on maps and in official documents, which Calder says is a great injustice to the Halsted

family — the original owners of the farm in Farmington that the road was named after.

"What's right is right," Calder said recently. "It's a historical fact. Why distort history?"

Though Calder said she has been concerned about the inaccuracy since the 1950s, she said she was motivated to take action several weeks ago when officials of the Walnut Lake School District announced a contest to select a name for a new elementary school being built on Halsted.

She said she was afraid someone would suggest naming it the "Halstead School," and that any hope of getting the road signs changed would be doomed.

The school board eventually settled on Pleasant Lake Elementary, but Calder said she will continue to prod the road commission to change the signs.

Her efforts earlier got the West Bloomfield Planning Department to adopt the traditional spelling and similar efforts by historian and Farmington City Council member Jean Fox got the signs changed in Farmington.

So now, signs in Farmington are spelled Halsted and those in West Bloomfield are spelled Halstead.

Fox has studied the history of the area and in a published account she explains that the Halsted land in Farmington was originally

acquired by James Boorn, who took title to 80 acres in a land grant dated Aug. 1, 1827 and signed by President John Quincy Adams.

Boorn and his wife, Olive Pettibone Boorn, moved to Michigan from New York state and later gave birth to two daughters, one of whom, Hannah, eventually married William Halsted, who also came to Farmington from New York.

William and Hannah had three children before moving back to New York, but the oldest child, Harvey, stayed here. In 1869, upon the death of his grandfather, James Boorn, Harvey Halsted inherited the farm on property north of 12 Mile.

The Halsted continued to farm the land over the years and eventually became well known as apple growers.

"That's important to Jean Fox.

"Our kids need to know that this state didn't just start yesterday," she said.

While her and Calder's efforts to restore a sense of historical integrity to the road signs in West Bloomfield are appreciated, road commission spokesman John Joy said the signs won't be changed over night.

Replacing signs is expensive and the commission will install new ones with the proper spelling only as the old ones wear out, Joy said.

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Dunckel assistant principal suffers a fatal heart attack

Co-workers were devastated last week at the sudden loss of Robert G. Anderson, assistant principal at O.E. Dunckel Middle School and a 26-year employee and longtime administrator for the Farmington Public Schools.

Anderson suffered a heart attack at his Brighton home and died at McPherson Hospital in Brighton on Thursday. The former Farmington resident and Iron River native was 60.



Robert G. Anderson
'real friend'

"It's a tragedy," assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter said Thursday. "I took the call this morning. I was just in a state of shock."

Nutter called Anderson a "real friend" to many and an effective, low-key administrator who never forgot whom he served — his students.

Services will be 10 a.m. today at Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington. Dr. Arthur Spafford of First United Methodist Church of Farmington will officiate.

He was an administrative assistant at what was then Power Junior High and Harrison High School. He also served as assistant principal at East, Warner and Dunckel middle schools.

During Anderson's tenure at Harrison, he aided in an important transition when principal Lewis Schulman was promoted to the district's superintendency, Nutter said.

Anderson is survived by his wife, Lila; one son, David; three daughters, Roberta Heckel, Laurie Nordin and Lisa; his mother, Evelyn Anderson; one sister, Shirley Conger; and one grandchild.

He had planned to retire from his school post in December.

Anderson was hired by Farmington Public Schools in 1963 and began serving as an administrator in 1969.

District to get help in search for chief

Consultant Karl Plath, aiding Farmington school board members in their search for a new superintendent, will be in the district Wednesday-Thursday, Oct. 25-26, to meet with various members of the community.

He is seeking feedback about what qualifications and characteristics should be considered in hiring a superintendent.

A community meeting allowing the public to meet Plath, and for him to gather information, is scheduled for 7:30-9:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26, at the district's central office, 32500 Shlawassee.

IN BOTH individual and group meetings over two days, Plath will

seek answers to the following:

- How would you describe the Farmington Public School District area to someone who does not know it?
- What are the key issues you feel should be attended to by the new superintendent and the board?
- What are the key personal and professional qualifications for the next superintendent?
- Why should an excellent candidate want to be superintendent of this district?

If residents are not able to attend the meeting, they can submit written statements to: Dr. Karl Plath, c/o Farmington Board of Education, 32500 Shlawassee, Farmington 48024.

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