

# Dr. Clark Jailed; Mystery Death Probe Is Continued



DISHEVELED—Dr. Ronald E. Clark is returned to Farmington Township Thursday night for arraignment.

Bloodhounds, tear gas and a policeman's gunfire were used last week to capture a 56-year-old Farmington Township physician on a charge of manslaughter.

Dr. Ronald E. Clark is being held in Oakland County Jail pending examination in Farmington Justice Court Nov. 24, unable to furnish the \$50,000 bond decreed upon his arraignment Thursday night.

He is specifically charged with killing his part-time nurse, Mrs. Grace Neil, 43, of 20225 Rensselaer, Livonia. She died Nov. 3 in Dr. Clark's office at 30735 Grand River, Farmington.

MRS. NEIL'S AUTOPOSTY, ordered by township police and Oakland County Prosecutor S. Jerome Bronson, showed she died as the result of an overdose of sodium pentothal, which also is known as the "truth serum" and reportedly was used frequently by Dr. Clark in treatment of his patients. Mrs. Neil was under his care for a heart ailment.

Other deaths which have occurred in Dr. Clark's office still are under investigation.

Between mid-day Wednesday, when police first established a stake-out at the Grand River address, and his capture at 3 a.m. Thursday deep in the snow of a woods at the top of the Michigan "Thumb," Dr. Clark twice mysteriously escaped from dwellings in which police officers thought they had him cornered.

Late Wednesday afternoon they broke into the clinic on Grand River to serve him with a manslaughter warrant, but came out empty-handed.

A policeman had seen him there earlier in the day. No one saw him leave during the period of surveillance, but he wasn't there.

AT 9 THAT same night, on the shore of Lake Huron, seven miles west of Port Austin and more than 100 miles from Farmington, deputies of the Huron County Sheriff's Department, raided the Clark summer cottage in five-degree temperature and saw lights in the cottage go out as they arrived.

When they entered, a fire was burning in the fireplace, an unfinished note which Dr. Clark had been writing still was in his typewriter—but of the elusive doctor there was no sign.

Tear gas was shelled into the second level, officers crawled into the narrow under-areas below the ground floor, and finally bloodhounds were turned loose to pick up the scent.

Six hours later, Huron County Deputy Orville Schuetz, working with the dogs, fired at a man he saw running through the woods less than a half-mile away, and only moments later Dr. Clark was routed from behind a bush at gunpoint to be returned to Farmington.

GAUNT, EXHAUSTED and bedraggled, the bearded and hooded physician was led into Farmington Township headquarters at 8:20 p.m. Thursday by township police who had gone earlier to Port Austin, and less than two hours later he was on his way to jail under an armed, five-man escort.

Even so, his appearance at township headquarters was marked by a scuffle between the doctor, his wife and two officers, apparently prompted when the Clarks attempted to pass a note of letter between them.

In the fracas a police pistol was snatched from one officer's holster, grabbed by another department aide, and kept from

the reach of either Dr. Clark or his wife.

During his arraignment before Justice Emory Jacques, who was pinch-hitting for Farmington Justice Byron Walter, Dr. Clark interrupted proceedings at one point to scream an accusation at a township detective of "torture."

DR. CLARK'S troubles with authorities date back to 1958, when his license to practice medicine was revoked for "unprofessional and dishonest conduct and moral turpitude," based upon the complaints of three women patients plus involvement in an abortion.

Webster defines "turpitude" as meaning "baseness, villainy, or depravity."

One of the complainants against him testified she had

been raped when she went to Dr. Clark for the abortion. But the license was restored in 1957 only to be lifted again in 1958 when a Farmington Township woman accused him of making improper advances to her in his office.

For a second time, he regained the license, this occurring in 1959, but in 1960 it was revoked for a third time. He got it back in 1963.

Police records in the investigation of Dr. Clark show that between 1954 and 1965, more than two dozen complaints of moral misconduct were filed against him with the State Medical Board.

Among the deaths believed to have occurred in his office was that of Mrs. Della H. Ziegler, 18520 Sunset, Livonia. The autopsy file shows one of the causes to have been "odium

pentothal intoxication."

The "unexplained circumstances" of several other deaths are being investigated, say police.

THEIR PROBE into Dr. Clark's activities came about because a baron, summoned by the physician, was parked illegally in front of his "Farmington Medical Group" clinic the night Mrs. Neil died, Nov. 3.

An officer on routine patrol went looking for the driver inside the clinic, found Mrs. Neil's body, and reported it immediately to Township Police Chief Irving H. Yates. Within two weeks Dr. Clark was behind bars.

The case exploded publicly Wednesday when Dr. John F. Burton, Wayne County Medical Examiner, announced he was asking for a suspension of Dr. Clark's license for the fourth time in the medico's career.

Township police and Prosecutor Bronson's office moved within hours to press criminal charges.

Dr. Clark and his wife have living quarters both the clinic on Grand River and at 725 S. Division St., Ann Arbor, as well as at Port Austin.

However, they do not own any of them, and Dr. Clark told Justice Jacques at his arraignment that he is totally without funds. After the physician signed an affidavit to that effect, the judge said he would ask Circuit Court to appoint an attorney to represent Dr. Clark.

Mrs. Clark told newsmen that she is a junior high school counselor in Dearborn, and that it is the second marriage for each of them.

Nov. 24, the date of Dr. Clark's justice court examination on the manslaughter accusation, will mark their fifth wedding anniversary.



THE WIFE—Mrs. Ronald Clark talks to newsmen outside the doctor's office at 30735 Grand River.

## Millage Would Offset Million Dollar Deficit

EDITOR'S NOTE: On Nov. 27 residents of the Farmington School District will be asked to vote on a \$9 million bond issue and to raise the operational levy by five mills for a 10 year period.

FRED DELANO  
Staff Writer

Of the two issues to be included on the upcoming Farmington School District ballot Nov. 27—bonds for construction and millage for operations—the latter is judged to face the greater hurdle because it would take a big, new bite from the taxpayers' pockets.

Passage of Proposition "B" will mean that each property owner will be required to pay an added \$5 per \$1,000 of his assessed valuation, as equalized, for 10 years, 1968 through 1977.

That same taxpayer already is paying \$8.40 per \$1,000 valuation for the current year's school operating costs on order of the Oakland County Allocation Board, plus an additional \$15 per \$1,000 valuation which was approved bit by bit in similar special elections in 1962, 1963 and 1965.

Thus, the total bill for operating costs for 1967-68 is \$23.40 per \$1,000, with another \$9 being added for debt retirement to produce the current school tax rate of \$32.40.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS say they can hold the line on the nine-

mill debt levy and that even if voters approve Proposition "A," which requests permission to issue \$9 million in new bonds to build four schools, this rate will not be increased by the levy set by the Allocation Board.

The tax increase, which this would mean in relation to 1967 assessments, is obvious. If there is an over-all increase in assessments within the district next year, without a rate reduction in the same ratio, the bite could be even more severe.

DR. RODERICK J. SMITH, superintendent of schools, recently declared:

"Leveled on the current tax base of \$154 million, this three-mill levy (Proposition "B") would provide an additional \$770,000. It will still be necessary to have a significant increase in state-aid revenue to balance the budget for 1968-69."

In comparison with 1967 figures, this contention holds water, for the present school budget is out of balance by approximately \$1 million.

A pre-election booklet distributed by the Board of Education in support of a "yes" vote reveals that income from all sources for the current year is expected to be \$1,285,000.

The same booklet pegs this year's operating expenditures at \$9,387,840.

That puts the deficit in the 1967-68 budget at \$1,002,840.

On the other hand, passage of Proposition "B" would give the Board of Education the right to levy 20 mills for operating purposes—instead of 15—on top of the levy set by the Allocation Board.

To meet this year's deficit, the Board tapped its cash reserve which had been built up to about \$1.3 million. With that depleted, the Board is relying on a tax boost as a replacement.

However, the hooker in this pre-election article is the fact that no one expects the tax base to remain at the \$154 million.

In some quarters it is being predicted that this will jump to a level as high as \$200 million in 1968, and were that to be true the same \$23.40 per \$1,000 as leveled this year would yield more than \$1 million extra.

The major impediments in next year's budgeting are "state-aid," and "teacher salaries." Remaining articles in this pre-election series will take a penetrating look at these topics to see their potential effect upon Farmington educational processes.

## Reaction To Opperthausen Ballot Proposal Is Guarded

One official reaction and not much possibility for any others. That's the situation which currently faces township trustees who voted Monday night to table Trustee Earl Opperthausen's proposal for a consolidation election including the entire 36-square mile Farmington area.

At the time of their action, the trustees said that they wanted time to think about the proposal, and also "to hear reactions from the other governmental units."

BRIEFLY Opperthausen called upon his fellow township trustees, along with councilmen from the two villages and the city to initiate a petition drive

calling for a consolidation election including the city, township and two villages.

Date of the election would be the general election of November, 1968 or following the completion of the study after time was allowed for study of the report's conclusions by the voters.

Previously the Farmington City Council went on record declaring a moratorium on any annexation activities by the city and promised to use its influ-

ence to head off any such moves on the part of any residents in either city or township.

IN THE ONLY official governmental reaction this week, the Village Council of Wood Creek Farms said Monday night that it "supports and endorses, in principle, a moratorium on all annexation, consolidation, incorporation, or other procedures calculated to modify or change the present territorial areas and forms of gov-

ernment."

The Council stated its "full confidence in the ability and objectivity of the Michigan State University Institute for Community Services," and endorsed "the pending study by such Institute for the purpose of developing possible alternative forms of government."

Village President William Brown told The Enterprise & Observer that the resolution was meant to be a policy stand

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## Twp. Sector Termed 'Vital'

A representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development told Farmington Township officials this week that there "is no doubt in my mind" but what a portion of the lower southeast corner of the township could qualify for federal renewal assistance.

However, he spoke only of what he had personally seen in the way of general structural blight and poor roadway conditions in the area which runs from the eastern city limits to Lakster Rd. and which lies between Shawassaw Rd. and Grand River.

"This could be made a vital area for the next 20 to 30 years," Alvin West of H.U.D.'s regional staff in Chicago told Supervisor Curtis Hall and Planning Consultant Charles

Leman after the latter pair had taken him on a guided tour of the sector Wednesday.

BUT WHILE West conceded that the need is there, he raised considerable doubt as to whether the Township is a qualified applicant under technicalities of existing H.U.D. regulations.

The biggest stumbling block is the Township's lack of a housing code.

"We could not even process an application past our office unless the Township adopts a housing code, hires inspectors, and demonstrates that the code is being enforced," said West. H.U.D. requires that it be furnished general plans for land use, thoroughness, capital improvements and a neighborhood

analysis, not only can be met but already have been given attention by Leman's staff.

When West's discussion with Hall and Leman turned to financing, the H.U.D. representative admitted that "funding is critical" even for an official federal survey of the area.

The earliest funding we could think about for this purpose would not be until after July of next year even if there were no obstacles," West said. He estimated it would take as much as two years to draw plans, put in an application and come up with a decision.

MEANWHILE, in reference to the mandatory housing code, Hall said he would ask the Township Planning Commission to consider this problem and

come up with a recommendation.

It was the Planning Commission which originated the idea to approach H.U.D. for a survey of the so-called "corridor of blight" and Township Trustees agreed to take preliminary steps without making any commitment on future action. This brought about West's last visit.

"The Township calls the met qualifications we could send other representatives out to evaluate the area."

Eventual implementation of any federal improvement plan for the sector still would require \$5 per cent financial participation by the township, West declared.



NEIGHBORHOOD DECAY — Evidence of the deterioration which, it is believed, may qualify a section of Farmington Township for federal rehabilitation assistance is seen in this condemned dwelling while being examined by local and federal officials. Checking the structure on

Wheeler St. are, from left to right, Kenneth Strobel, Alvin West, Supervisor Curtis Hall and Charles Leman. West is a representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, while Leman and Strobel serve the Township as planning consultants.