

# Poison Pen Letter Key In Defeat Of Director

The Peoples Community Hospital Authority, which includes Garden City and Westland, rejected the re-election of one of its members, Robert Bullinger, of Dearborn Heights, who has been on the board since its start in 1965 and has been the chairman for 15 years.

The defeat of Bullinger as a delegate at-large of the 42-member board came after the other members received a poison pen letter urging his defeat and cast seven ballots to break a deadlock.

The nine-page letter was not signed but carried the signature of Kenneth W. Gremora, who was fired as the authority's executive director in 1965 after serving 18 years in the position.

Bullinger, who accepted his defeat calmly, said that he wasn't sure how much effect the letter had on the election or even if it was actually written by Gremora, whose dismissal was part of a controversy and state attorney general's investigation involving alleged misuse of public funds for lobbying and entertainment purposes.

The Dearborn Heights man said in a letter to fellow

## Six Cent Mail Rate Not New

"It's still one of the best bargains in the world."

That's what Postmaster John Shiven of Garden City said about the six-cent stamp as he recounted facts and figures from postal history to back up his claim.

Even though the five-cent letter rate has suffered the same fate as the nickel cigar, first-class postage is cheaper today than it was in many bygone eras when a few pennies meant much more than they do today.

In 1816, for instance, a single sheet letter cost six cents for delivery up to 30 miles. More sheets and more miles cost more money. A letter going 400 miles cost 25 cents per sheet.

In those days the recipient had to pay the postage, not the sender. And if the letter was accepted for delivery to the recipient, rather than picked up at the Post Office, there was an extra charge that was kept by the carrier.

It wasn't until 1855 that the sender was required to pay in advance for mail, Shiven said. Uniform rates regardless of distance and free city delivery were written into the postal law books in 1863. When distance was dropped as a factor in computing rates, so was the practice of charging per sheet. The basic unit for letter postage became a half ounce in 1863. The basic unit of one ounce that still prevails today went into effect in 1905.

Turning to more recent history, Shiven pointed out that the 100 per cent increase--from three to six cents--in first-class postal rates since 1935 compares very favorably with general increases in prices and wages.

General consumer prices have gone up about 200 per cent since 1932 and the average hourly earnings of manufacturing workers have risen by about 550 per cent, Shiven said.

"Back in 1947 the letter rate was still three cents and everyone agreed that was a really good deal," he said.

Since then family income has gone up about 175 per cent while the cost of mailing a letter has increased 100 per cent. If letter postage was worth three cents in the 1940s, in terms of today's dollar it's worth more than six cents."

Shiven estimated that the increase in postal charges that went into effect Jan. 7 will add only \$2.25 a year to the \$16 the average household spent on postal services under the old rates.

Despite the great distance many letters must travel in the United States, our postal rates are lower than in most other major countries, particularly when based on ability to pay, Shiven said. The average American worker earns the price of a six-cent stamp in 1.3 minutes. It takes the average British worker 2.5 minutes to earn letter postage, the West German worker 2.7 minutes and the French worker 5.6 minutes.

Shiven said the higher postal rates mean that a greater share of the cost of running the Postal Service will be borne by users of the mails rather than the taxpayer.

"With the six-cent stamp we are returning to the postal rate charged when New York was called New Amsterdam and was a Dutch colony," he said. "Then the postage rate there was three (shivers of wampum) -- the equivalent of about six cents."

directors the week-end before the meeting that he is aware that a movement is afoot to remove him from the board."

His letter outlined his qualifications, including serving on the board since its formation 22 years ago and watching the authority grow from a \$25 a month operation to its present size of a \$17 million budget and covering nearly 2,000 employees.

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**DEFEATING BULLINGER** was Jack O'Brien, a Wayne druggist, who was also the

target of criticism in the letter containing Gremora's name, and Roy Berger, former City Clerk of River Rouge, a community which owes the authority \$369,239.25 in past assessments, dating back to 1963.

With five nominated for two of the seven members-at-large positions and a majority of the 22 members present required for election, O'Brien was the first elected, his victory coming on the fifth ballot.

The next vote had Bullinger and Berger tied at 11 votes each and the seventh ballot saw

one of the directors change his vote and break the tie, giving Berger the seat on a 12-10 vote.

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**ALSO RE-ELECTED** to one-year terms were Board Chairman Donald J. Pizzementi of Allen Park; Vice Chairman Pat Norton of Wayne; and Treasurer Robert Ramer of Flat Rock.

The new face on the board's slate of officers is Timothy J. Myer of Ypsilanti, recently promoted to principal of the Adlai Stevenson Junior High School in Westland, to open next September.

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The letter bearing Gremora's name said that "I shall make every effort to see that this man (Bullinger) is not re-elected."

The letter also claimed numerous other events involving Bullinger, Pizzementi, O'Brien, Norton, and William Tullis, former Garden City delegate on the board and secretary for the past three years, and contained continuous misspellings of the names of the board members.

The letter also pointed out

that the charges brought by the state attorney general in early 1966 have been dropped and a breach of contract lawsuit started by Gremora is still pending and is scheduled to reach Circuit Court trial in May.

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**IN HIS LETTER** to his colleagues, Bullinger pointed out that in his 22 years on the board, this marks the first time he has ever solicited votes for reappointment.

"My attendance at board and committee meetings has been

very near perfect," he said. "The authority has cost me time and money beyond your wildest dreams and has been a considerable disadvantage to my activity in local government. (He was an unsuccessful candidate for Dearborn Township Supervisor in 1959 and last year lost his bid for re-election to the Dearborn Heights City Council.)

"Yet the compensation measured in terms other than money has been most satisfying and I am extremely proud of what can be seen."

Following his defeat, Bullinger was given a standing ovation and many of the board members afterwards walked up to him to shake his hand and express how they will miss his experience on the board in the future.

Although the board agreed officially to ignore the letter with Gremora's name, Belleville delegate Floyd Theford termed it "the most ridiculous thing I've ever read and I'll bet my life that all the things said in the letter are not true."

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