

DEVELOPMENTS



Out In The Paperwork Wilderness

Why does a log cabin have such a significant place in the symbolism of American history?

It meant humble origins, of course. Today a politician would better refer to his birth in a two-bedroom assisted bungalow which his parents brought on a land contract.

But more significantly, a log cabin embodied the old American ideals of independence, self-determination and the cooperative spirit of the American pioneer.

But what would happen if someone tried to build a log cabin today?

I think I found out.

Clearing virgin forest is not my bag. I do haunt the do-it-yourself departments at the local discount store, and tend to wade into remodeling jobs with nothing more than a heavy hammer and a vague idea of the end result.

When my garage burned down last summer on my Detroit homestead, it seemed only natural to attempt to replace it myself.

Apparently the charred remains on the old concrete slab stirred the same feelings the Cumberland Valley inspired in Daniel Boone. Regardless, I determined the new structure would be

raised by my own hands.

A couple of friends got into the "barn-raising" spirit one weekend and volunteered to help.

Whereupon I ventured into the paperwork wilderness which had to be cleared away before work could begin, something like clearing the forest on the site of an ancient homestead.

A building inspector materialized at the first sign of activity, obviously ill at ease at the non-professional atmosphere.

There followed three trips to city hall, finally ending with enough information in

hand to secure a building permit for the modest structure.

Mr. Boone was already beginning to turn over in his grave.

With the tall trees at city hall felled, there remained the undergrowth at the mortgage company.

They flatly did not believe when I said I was going to build it myself.

Never coming out and actually questioning my integrity, they gave the distinct feeling they thought this was some new version of a HUD scandal, and they weren't going to be fooled again.

After signing and co-signing my way through the underbrush, I was left with the impression mortgage companies think the dwellings and other structures they finance begin and end with their paperwork.

Red tape they understand—surveyor's tape, never.

One of the most incredulous looks I have ever seen was on the lady who tipped up her glasses and said, "You are going to BUILD IT YOURSELF?"

After seven days fighting the paper tigers, actual construction got under way.

After two days, a recognizable garage stands behind the house, minus a few essentials like a roof and door.

We were hanging around, feeling a little like a Currier and Ives print "Raising the Garage," when a friend of mine in the building business wandered by.

Mistaking my friends for a professional crew, he took me aside and said:

"Usually those guys get a garage like that up in a day."

Daniel Boone would have suggested him.

Insurance FACTS

by Robert H. Bergstrom, CPCU

How do you know a good insurance agent? Remember that insurance is a highly technical business, and that most buyers cannot expect to know for themselves just what they need. It is generally necessary to rely heavily on an agent or broker to tell him. Often, just talking with an agent will give you an idea about how capable and knowledgeable he is. Going to a reputable agent or broker often insures that the information will be factual. A good insurance agent will want to know exactly what your property is worth, and what sort of insurance you already have.

Our experienced and knowledgeable agents at BERGSTROM INSURANCE AGENCY, 29700 Orchard Lake Rd., Farmington Hills, 626-4400, are wise in all areas of insurance. As specialists in personal protection we have: personal life insurance, estate analysis and programming, retirement plans, mortgage redemption plans, educational savings plans, auto insurance, homeowners, mobile homes and recreational vehicles. Liberal financing. Open: Mon.-Fri. 9-5; other hours by appointment.

INSURANCE FACT: Using raisins in salads? Soak them in a little hot water for a few minutes before using them, to make them soft and plump.

Patterson Attacks Welfare Fraud At Chamber Breakfast

FARMINGTON

"If you are in favor of reforming the system by eliminating the cheater and the greedy so that the needy can be helped, sign below," reads the petition.

L. Brooks Patterson, elected a year ago to the office of Oakland County Prosecutor, made welfare fraud a top priority item almost immediately.

He is using the office to urge tightening the welfare rules, and is petitioning the state legislature to make changes in the law.

Speaking recently at the Farmington Chamber of Commerce's "eye-opener" breakfast, Patterson said after he began his program of investigating welfare fraud, Oakland County is the only county in the state going down in welfare costs.

He became interested in

welfare cheating shortly after taking office.

"I wanted to see just how serious the problem was," he said.

His method, which later kicked off a major controversy, was to send eight secretaries over to the local welfare office with instructions to lie when filling out the forms about such matters as to whether they were employed, married or had children.

"I expected about five would be undetected," Patterson said. "None were."

He added the checks were returned, voided, to the department.

"You remember the department said 'We would have caught it by the second check?'"

"After we notified them what had happened, one of my secretaries got a second



BROOKS PATTERSON check, then a third. "It's easier to get on welfare than to get off."

Patterson announced a moratorium on prosecutions, stating anyone who began restitution on fraudulent claims would not be prosecuted.

"In the first month, 43 people came in, a total savings of \$70,000," he said.

During his "test" of the system, he said he was most upset at the lack of scrutiny. "They didn't ask for a birth certificate when the girls said they had so many children."

Patterson feels the problem is widespread. He estimates 20 per cent of the state's \$14 billion social service budget is "waste."

He said \$64 million is spent annually on welfare in Oakland County.

After Patterson's comments were received by the chamber of commerce audience with applause, Oak-

land County Commissioner Lew Coy, who represents the northwest corner of Farmington, said, "We're with Brooks 100 per cent, but it's really not the county's responsibility."

"The county is responsible for only the first 30 days. Those are all state employees at the department of social services."

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More Signs Considered

FARMINGTON

The Farmington City Council waded deeper into interpretation of the new sign ordinance Monday, taking a request for bigger signs on the World Wide Shopping Center, and approving a free-standing sign for the Burger

Chef at Warner and Grand River.

A request for a variance from Ward Sign Co., asking for permission to install an oversized sign in the shopping center was tabled after the council was told several other signs in the center

were already installed larger than the ordinance allowed.

A representative from a company installing standard signs on Burger Chef franchises was given permission to replace the present sign with a smaller one.

Requests for variances

have been coming in almost weekly since the city adopted a more stringent sign ordinance last summer.

The ordinance makes several types of signs, particularly in the downtown business district, non-conforming.

The aim is to eventually eliminate free-standing signs downtown.

The Farmington city offices will be closed Dec. 24 and 25; Dec. 31, and Jan. 1, for the holidays. City offices will be in normal operation the day after each holiday.

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3 Named Planners

FARMINGTON

The Farmington Hills Council re-appointed three members to the planning commission Monday.

Stella Strye, Edgar Raedte and Charles Owen were named.

City Offices Change Hours

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Christmas Guide FOR SHOPPERS

| | |
|--|---|
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| <p>COUPON</p> <p>7 FT.</p> <p>ARTIFICIAL TREE FLAME RESISTANT \$12.88</p> <p>With This Coupon</p> | <p>COUPON</p> <p>LADY SUNBEAM ELECTRIC SHAVER \$6.77</p> <p>With This Coupon</p> |
| <p>COUPON</p> <p>CHRISTMAS GIFT WRAP 6 ROLL PKG. 77¢</p> <p>ONLY With This Coupon</p> | <p>COUPON</p> <p>PROCTOR-SILEX GLASS PERCOLATOR \$9.99</p> <p>10 CUP With This Coupon</p> |
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