

Area man maintains old park—for free

By JUDITH BERNE

Luckily for West Bloomfield, resident Bill Barnes includes himself in the deal which gives the township control of Bloomer State Park.

Barnes, who lives on Middle Straits Lake directly next to Bloomer off Richardson Road, for years has opened and closed the gates, made sure park and lake rules were enforced and generally created a positive environment for park users.

His compensation has been a pleasant, peaceful 36-acre woodland at his doorstep.

Ten years ago, Barnes now in his 40s, purchased his boyhood home from his parents when they retired and moved south.

He had firm remembrances of lake-front living and of the state-run park where as a youngster he helped mind a small store which sold pop, ice cream and charcoal and rented row boats to park users.

Returning, "I noticed quite a change," Barnes recalls.

The store and facilities for overnight camping were gone and a parking area had been supplanted by a public boat launch. The grass was unkempt and

the gates remained open after hours, allowing people to gather at all hours of the night, sometimes to drink and use drugs.

ONE NIGHT, not long after Barnes his wife Gloria and three daughters had moved in, "there was a heck of a commotion," Barnes recalls.

Arriving on the scene, he said he got himself "into quite a situation." West Bloomfield and Oakland County police officers responded to his call for help.

"It took five police cars to break up the party," he said. "I don't have to live in this kind of environment." Barnes told himself. "The DNR had let the park go to the devil."

He and other park neighbors appealed to the state to take more notice of the park and got some response. DNR employees assigned from the larger Proud Lake Recreation Area started cutting the grass and picking up the trash, but there was still no one who consistently monitored the boat launch on weekends and closed the gates at the 10 p.m. hour stated in park rules, according to Barnes.

"I live here. I love the park. I'd be more than happy to open and close the gates for you," Barnes told the DNR. He's been doing it ever since during the May-September period the park is open to vehicles.

He also enforces the Sunday "no wake" hours when motor-operated boats are outlawed on Middle Straits Lake.

"COMMON GUYS, it's 10:15 p.m. — you're going to make me miss my movie," Barnes calls via a speaker run through his CB to cars parked at Bloomer at closing hour. His words may be accompanied by a high power hand light.

He successfully coaxes as many as 60 cars of young people each summer night to start wending their way, hopefully home. He believes in a light hand. "I'm not playing policeman. I'm just informing people," Barnes explains. "Raising three girls, I know 85 percent of those kids."

Barnes also knows many of the cars contain young people drinking wine and beer (liquor, but not wine and beer are prohibited at Bloomer under state

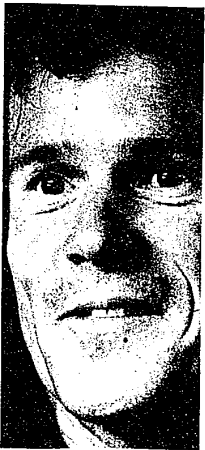
management) and maybe, smoking marijuana.

"I don't like drugs or minors using alcohol," he said. At the same time, he recognizes "kids today have to have some place to go. You can't close them in. Unless it turns into a bash, I leave them alone."

He has mixed feelings about whether the township should extend that ban to wine and beer. "I hate to ruin it for the kids," he says.

BARNES EXPECTS to continue his rounds as West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation assumes control of the park, officially signed last week.

He may even play a greater role. He will be among the residents serving on a Bloomer Park committee to make recommendations to the parks and recreation commission.



BILL BARNES

Citizen of Year bids are sought

An individual who has performed outstanding services to Farmington will be honored in October by being named "Citizen of the Year" in a program sponsored by the Farmington Chamber of Commerce.

Nominations of deserving persons may be made immediately and must be received by the chamber of commerce no later than Oct. 1.

Eligible for the 1979 title is anyone who the judges determine has given outstanding service to the Farmington community during the period Sept. 1, 1978, to Sept. 1, 1979, beyond related

job duties.

There are no limitations on the basis of age, sex or residency. Men and women in any field may be nominated and are not required to live in Farmington or Farmington Hills, but must have contributed outstanding services to Farmington.

Nominators are asked to fill in a form available at the chamber office — 23715 Farmington Road, Farmington, 48024. For more information, call the chamber office at 474-3440.

Nominations must be received no later than Oct. 1.

Commission plans 2 open meetings

The Advisory Board to the Farmington Area Commission on Aging has set two meetings for this week.

One session will be held from 1-3:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 20, in Farmington Hills Community Library on 12 Mile

Road. The other will run from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 22, in Farmington Community Library on Liberty.

Both sessions are open to all persons interested in the lives of the area's older citizens.

WB school bargaining to begin

Informal bargaining continues this week between the West Bloomfield Board of Education and district teachers.

"We have nothing in writing," C. James Lafkietes, chief negotiator for the board, reported at Monday's meeting. "We almost went into full table bargaining for Wednesday. It could be any time."

Lafkietes and Joseph Piasecki, the district's project manager, have been meeting informally with West Bloomfield Education Association President

Joseph Lupi and his advisor, Karen Filari, twice each week since the beginning of the month.

The district's current contract with its more than 280 teachers expires Aug. 31. School is tentatively scheduled to start Sept. 19 — a full two-weeks later than normal — in a board effort to avoid either a local or countywide strike.

West Bloomfield District classes traditionally resume the Wednesday following Labor Day.

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PINE LAKE MALL Orchard Lake Road at Lone Pine Road Mon.-Thurs. 10-7 Friday, 10-9 Sat. 10-7 Sun. 12-5	KINGSWOOD CENTER Woodward at Square Lake Road by Kingswood Theatre 10-9 Mon.-Fri. 10-7 Sat. 12-5 Sun.	MELROY PLAZA Dequindre at 14 1/2 Mile Road 10-9 Mon. thru Fri. 10-7 Sat. 12-5 Sun.	CHATHAM SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER Midfield at 11 Mile Road in Farmington Hills 10-9 Mon. thru Fri. 10-7 Sat. 12-5 Sun.
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