

# Letter To Editors Libels Teeple's, Is Unfair Campaign Tactic—Kahn

By WYLIE GERDES

Supporters of Earl Teeple's bid for the Republican nomination for Farmington Township Supervisor have asked two newspapers to retract statements printed about Teeple's.

Bernard Kahn, Teeple's attorney and campaign manager, said the Inter Lakes News, with offices in Kewego Harbor, and the Pontiac Press printed a "Letter to the Editor" statements which libel Teeple's and which may be contrary to fair campaign practice laws.

THE LETTER appeared in the Wednesday, July 15 issue of the Inter Lakes News. A

spokesman for the Pontiac Press said a much edited version of the same letter appeared in the Friday, July 17, issue of that newspaper.

The letter in the Inter Lakes News was allegedly signed by 26 members of the Farmington Township Police Department. It asserted that Teeple's broke the police department rule book by getting involved in politics and has no respect for laws or people.

THE LETTER ALSO adds that it was not sponsored by any police association or group.

It concludes with an allegation that the Farmington Township Police Department has been injured by the actions of Teeple's, and the typewritten names of 26 men.

The Pontiac Press spokesman said it apparently received the same letter as was printed in the Inter Lakes News. The edited version said the employees of the Farmington Township Police Department know Teeple's lacks the ability and integrity to be supervisor of the township.

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The edited version also charged that Teeple's had broke the police department rules by getting involved in politics.

The Pontiac Press spokesman said it's printed version did not name the men alleged to have signed the letter but ended with the words "26 Farmington Township Police-men."

KAHN SAID many of the statements made in the letter are libelous per se and that the publication of any false information is an unfair campaign practice.

The attorney also charged that all the men listed as signing the letter did not.

One of them was out of the state at the time," Kahn charged.

He said the newspapers would have to print retractions on their own volition in approximately the same position in the newspaper.

"They would have to say something on their own in the same place, in the same type, in the same everything," Kahn commented.

THE FARMINGTON Enterprise & Observer apparently received the same letter as printed in the Inter-Lakes News and, after editing, in the Pontiac Press.

The text of the letter is the

same as printed in the Inter-Lakes News and has the same typed signatures at the bottom of the letter.

Attached to the letter received by the Enterprise & Observer is a copy of signatures of the men headed by the statement: "The below listed officers feel that the morale of the Farmington Township Police Department has been injured by the actions of Det. Earl Teeple's."

The envelope containing the letter bears a Berkley postmark and is dated July 11. The typewritten letter printed in the Inter Lakes News and the edited version in the Pontiac Press is dated July 7, 1970.

The copy of the 26 signatures is dated April 25, 1969. The date is in the period of the Teeple's trial board hearing in which Teeple's was cleared of several counts of misconduct stemming from revealing

charges of brutality within the township police department.

Two of the 26 officers who allegedly signed the letter would not comment when contacted by the Enterprise & Observer. Lt. Russ Conway, head of the detective department of which Teeple's is a member, and George R. Mair, the third member of the department, said it was against department rules to become involved in politics.

THE TWO, among others, were rumored by Teeple's supporters to not have signed the letter.

The letter was not published in the Enterprise & Observer because of a policy of requiring signatures on all letters to the editor.

Decision was made that the copy of the 26 signatures dated April 25, 1969, would not satisfy the qualification for a letter dated July 7, 1970.

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