

# Young Stone Cutter Has Monumental Trade

By W.W. EDGAR

If you were a young fellow, just out of school, looking for a place to launch a career, chances are that you wouldn't head for the tombstone section of a monument works.

That is, you wouldn't, unless you met young David Allen, the stone cutter at Mike Allen's Memorial factory on Northville Road.

With a smile from ear to ear, young Dave will tell you that he couldn't have selected a career that has given him more satisfaction than cutting of epitaphs on big chunks of marble and granite.

"I CAN'T think of an occupation that brings me as much satisfaction," he said, "and I get a new thrill every time we get a new design to prepare."

"And aside from the actual cutting of the stone, there's always the added satisfaction of easing a person's sorrow in

the days of their bereavement over a relative or friend."

What attracted him to a career of lettering tombstones?

"Well, up in Imlay City in the Thurn District," he answered, "I didn't have much choice."

"We had only two choices—the pickle plant or the monument works. And I just couldn't see myself dabbling in pickles and brine for the rest of my life. So I went to the stone cutter and arranged to learn that trade. And I've never been sorry."

IT IS MERELY happenstance that young Dave carries the same name as the owner of the monument works, and he laughs every time he thinks of how he got to Northville.

"I was just a lay kid when I graduated from Imlay City," Dave said, "and my dad demanded that I learn a trade."

"I got started at the stone cutting trade during the summer, and by fall my folks

moved to Pontiac where dad insisted that I come to work in the Pontiac auto plant."

"I just didn't like it. I heard there was a monument works in Milford and one day I walked the 11 miles from Pontiac to Milford and met Mr. Allen. He hired me and transferred me to Northville. And here I am, having the time of my life."

THE MOST unusual stone cutting he ever has done?

He laughed and said it was rather strange that he should be asked that question the day after he had finished it.

"I was given a surprise the other evening when Mike Heizer, who placed that controversial block of granite in the lawn at the Detroit Institute of Arts, came out here and asked if I would cut a top stone for him."

"And it was the strangest job I ever had. He placed a piece of paper on the floor, dropped a big handful of match sticks on the paper and wherever they stopped he asked me to cut. There were about 250 matches—but that's what he wanted. And it was delivered in time for the dedication."

The biggest thrill he has received from his job was the building of a shrine at Forest Lawn cemetery in Detroit.

He confided that he just couldn't describe the warm feeling he had all the while he was placing the statues of Jesus and Mary in the big circle. But it was a thrill he'll never forget.

At least, he said, "It's a far cry from dabbling around in pickle barrel and brine back in Imlay City."



DAVID ALLEN: "I just couldn't see myself dabbling in pickles and brine." (Observer photo by Bob Woodring)

## Students Make Space System

Two Observerland students were among a group of University of Michigan aerospace engineering students who have designed a new satellite communications system for Alaskan television.

Ross Richardson, of Livonia, and Sharon Setzer, of Farmington, were among 21 engineering students who worked on the university's project MEDUSA—Michigan Educational and Utility Satellite for Alaska. The project grew out of a senior level course in aerospace system design taught by Prof. Wilbur C. Nelson.

The student group's design is for a satellite system capable of overcoming problems of terrain, climate, and distance which have made

## C'ville High Open House

All Clarenceville High School parents may attend a spring open house at the high school beginning at 7:30 p.m. on May 4.

According to Dr. Ray Renbarger, principal, "The purpose of the open house is to enable parents to become familiar with the excellent educational program offered in our high school, and to give parents the opportunity to meet the teachers by following a mini-schedule of classes for their student(s)."

The open house is being sponsored by the newly organized Clarenceville High School Parent Teacher Student Association.

"We hope that all parents in the district will make every effort to attend this important and enjoyable program," said Mrs. Esther Bornstein, president of the new organization.

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## Oakland Offers Indian Dig

The campus of Oakland University in Rochester will become an archeological base camp this summer for digging into the vanishing traces of Indian settlement in Oakland County.

Students enrolled in an eight-credit summer session course entitled "directed field research in archeology" will participate in excavations being conducted on one or more of 22 known sites in the vicinity.

John B. Humer, instructor in the department of sociology and anthropology, says emphasis will be placed on those sites in imminent danger of being destroyed due to urban sprawl.

Humer notes that the ages of some of the recent findings show that man was hunting mastodons in this area when glaciers were carving out the hills of Rochester. He also points out that one of the most recent archeological discoveries in Oakland County was a pair of Indian graves uncovered just a few miles from campus.

"SINCE MATERIALS have been recovered which date as early as 10,000 years ago," Humer comments, "the ecological aspects of man's adaptation to this changing environment promise to be quite interesting."

The students may find themselves digging into an

ossuary—a burial pit bearing the remnants of what the Huron Indians called a "feast of the dead." Humer says the grisly festival was a periodic event to which the Hurons brought all their dead—recent and no so recent—and then danced the bodies around a huge pit before dropping them in. Some prized belongings were tossed in, too, to help make the deceased more comfortable in the next world.

Students will spend most of their time at the excavation sites, learning methods of digging and data recovery along with such allied techniques as surveying and mapping, photography, and methods of laboratory analysis.

Enrollment will be limited to 30 students (on a first-come, first-served basis). It is not restricted to anthropology majors, although students should have had an introductory course in anthropology. This requirement may be waived by the instructor.

Directed Field Research in Anthropology will be one of about 80 courses being offered in Oakland's eight-week Summer Session, June 21-August 15.

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