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# The Observer

## OF FARMINGTON

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Paul M. Chandler, Founder

This Week's Press Run

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The six Observer Newspapers are Michigan's largest weekly newspaper group. Complete to-the-minute news of local interest. Special coverage of dynamic Western Wayne County.

# Clarenceville Section of Township Is Troubled, Bitter

By ALLEN ROSENFELD

Dissatisfaction is widespread in the Clarenceville section of Farmington Township. That was the impression after an extensive tour of the area on Sunday.

The area, technically described as Grand River Crest Subdivision, is the eastern entrance to the Township. Its boundaries are Eight Mile Road on the south, and Shiawassee on the north; Inkster on the east and Colwell on the west.

The angry residents are solid citizens. Many of them are businessmen.

They are unhappy about their water tax, about blight, about their tax assessments, about a lot of things. But the main cause of their unhappiness is their feeling that they are being treated as the poor stepchild of the Township.

This feeling has long existed. But it is growing stronger, and more organized.

The problem is not essentially one of personalities. The Clarenceville middle class feels it has been mistreated by administration after administration, and that the current one is no exception. But they do charge that the present Supervisor Curt Hall, is inaccessible, irresponsible, and apparently trying to ignore them.

A major problem here is one of communication. A first step toward alleviating it may have been taken. On Monday, Hall expressed a willingness to meet with dissatisfied residents, and one of the resi-

dents agreed to try to set up such a meeting.

Clarenceville is a classic example of a good neighborhood growing old, but unwilling to admit it.

Many of its best residents still desire to live in it. They spend big money to give their homes a face lifting; while houses around them become ramshackled.

Some residents, of course, try to leave. And when they do, buyers scarce, some of them find the renters, naturally, don't keep the houses up as well as the owners did, and the neighborhood continues to slide.

The shabby neighborhood gets, the more people want to leave it. But they find that because of the conditions around them they can't get their money out. This is the point Clarenceville has reached to date.

The solid citizens look out at an abandoned house that has become a hangout for youngsters of both sexes. They see crime life all around them. They see abandoned cars and open septic tanks.

These solid citizens pushed for and got an anti-blight law. But, as Robert Harborne, a building contractor who lives at 2122 St. Francis, explains it, the Hall administration, like administrations before him, is apathetic to Clarenceville's problems. Rather, it concentrates its energies on servicing the newer, richer subdivisions to the north.

Curt Hall denies this. He says his administration has been making a "vigorous effort" in the area. He says Clarenceville gets a "proportionately" the same share of public services as any other subdivision, and that his administration will continue to make a "vigorous effort" in the area.

Douglas MacArthur, a contractor who lives at 2123 St. Francis, feels that most of Clarenceville's troubles would be over if there were a strict enforcement of the anti-blight law. The Township Zoning Inspector, William Taylor, however, says things aren't quite that simple. He showed this reporter carbon copies of scores of anti-blight tickets he has written. But he doesn't deem plenty of blight remains.

The strictest sight in the subdivision is the abandoned house at 2122 Colwell. Joe Marsh, a retired Ford worker who lives in a neat pretty home at 2125 Colwell, told this reporter of continuous lawless goings-on at abandoned 2122.

In explaining why this situation has been tolerated, Inspector Taylor showed me evidence of the fact that he was unable for a long time to find the owner of the house. "Having found him, all we can do is make him board the house up. We can't force him to tear it down. This is a limitation of the present ordinance."

As to the presence of unsightly trash and another eye sore in the area, Taylor says "It's hard to prove a truck is being used for business. If its

being used merely for transportation you can't touch it." Taylor admits Ontario is a mess, but he feels the good residents are forgetting how bad it was before he and the anti-blight law came in two years ago. He feels he spends more time in Grand River Crest than in any other subdivision.

Another major gripe is over assessments, which the residents feel are too high. Mrs. Eva Newman, a widow who has just sold her luxurious ranch home at 21205 St. Francis, for \$300, feels assessments are too high because you can't get anywhere near as much from a buyer.

She recalls that she paid a \$485 property tax in 1964.

"Mr. Hall has told me that if I lived in Kendallwood I could expect to pay \$500. I told him if I lived in Kendallwood I would expect to pay more because I would be getting something for my money? Every home is comparable in value. Every home is kept up. The whole neighborhood is clean and well cared for."

Hall's side of the story is this: That the assessments are based on the cash value of the houses. And, he adds, the houses in Kendallwood are assessed much higher than those in Grand River Crest.

**WATER PROBLEM**

Cash-wise, the biggest beef in Clarenceville is the additional water tax they are being forced to pay. A leader in mobilizing public opinion against this tax is John Behrens, a licensed master plumber, who lives at 21019 St. Francis. It is his opinion, and it is shared by many in the subdivision, that their recent transfer from the Farmington Township Water system to that of Oakland County was merely back-passing. These people feel that the recent increase in their water tax was an unfair burden levied for the benefit of the newer northern subdivisions.

Hall, explaining his side of it, recalls that the area was serviced by the Detroit Water Board, which had a fixed rate to serve only 2,720 people, or 776

home. The line actually operated with a slight overburden of 792 families.

In 1960, there was a problem and the Water Board levied the pressure from its pumping station at Six and Inkster. But, says Hall, the Board said it would only provide the service until the Township got its own system.

Now the Township has its own system, and Hall says the Clarenceville people are being charged only their proportionate share of the costs of the transmission lines for it.

Behrens has raised certain questions with respect to the water. In an interview with the Observer, Curt Hall has provided some answers:

Behrens asked: "Why are we being charged a \$5 debt charge when our charges have been paid for 25 years? Hall answers that the charge is for the transmission line."

Behrens asks: "Why are we charged \$3.75 capital charge?" Hall replies: "Their \$3.75 per quarter comes to \$15 a year. Everyone else in the Township

pays \$75. They get by for only \$15 because they had surplus money in the system and we are able to use it to make up the \$60."

Behrens asks: "Why are we charged \$1.50 for a service charge?" Hall answers: "This is an old system. Its only reasonable to expect that the service and maintenance on their old distribution line will be higher than the new system."

Behrens asks: "Why is our water bill four times as high as when it was in private hands?" One thing, explains Hall, they are now getting a better system. Behrens says the system isn't any better; the same three inch line, the same pressure. Hall says the pressure is greater.

Expanding on the subject, Hall explained: "They have an improved system and in the new master planned system for the entire Township the rate was established by the Detroit Water Board for the entire Township. We compare very favorably with the surrounding communities in the cost of providing Detroit City water."

To the charge that he passed the buck in turning over the Township Water System to the County, Hall says the Township did so because the County has greater personnel and efficiency, since they provide this service to many communities. He says the cost would be substantially higher if the Township had maintained control.

The solid citizens admit they are not without blame for the present conditions. Norman A. Hunt, of 21215 St. Francis, a production manufacturer with the Maynard Mfg. Co., a public spirited man active in American Field Service and Recreation Commission work, blames political apathy. Not only is the section small, it has the poorest voting record in the Township.

What is the future of Clarenceville as a middle class community? Frank Schumacher, a wrecking contractor who lives at 21207 St. Francis, had considered moving to Grosse Pointe. Instead he threw considerable money into modernizing and beautifying his present home. He has lived there for 15 years. He likes his neighbors. He says he is staying.

## Youth Guidance Leader Predicts Heavy Delinquency in Farmington in August

Adolescent delinquency in the Farmington area will be higher in August than in any other month of this year, predicts Wesley Mitchell, Chairman of the Fact Finding Subcommittee of the Farmington Youth Guidance Committee. His prediction is based on a statistical study of the years 1952, 1953, and 1954, contained in the Committee's yearly report just released.

The current controversy over whether Rev. Robert Eddy, be-

cause of his expressed advocacy of trial marriages, should continue as Chairman of the Committee has obscured the fact that the Committee has been doing important work on a crucial problem. The Committee has a professional case worker who works directly with troubled youths. In addition, it studies the problem of delinquency on a long range scale.

The most significant finding in the current statement has to do with the number of juvenile offenses broken down into individual months. The statistics show that over the three year period, offenses have been consistently more frequent in August than in any other month. Based on

this fact, Wesley Mitchell advises parents to make a special effort with their children during this month.

The Committee has also been studying the question of whether some neighborhoods consistently have more adolescent delinquency than others. Although some areas appear to be consistently higher than others, no positive conclusions have yet been made.

A third three year study by the Farmington group was a comparison of the location of offenses with the location of the residences of offenders. What the Committee is trying to determine here is whether delinquency is more prevalent in

the gathering places of young people, or in the neighborhoods where they live.

### City Councilmen Planning a Map

The Farmington City Council is planning to develop a portable map to make the issues it is discussing more understandable to its audience.

### Blind To Solicit

The Farmington City Council has granted permission to the Associated Blind Service Agency of Greater Detroit to solicit funds in the City, on Sept. 23, 24 and 25.



**YOUTH GUIDANCE COMMITTEE OF Greater Farmington** is seen at its meeting on Friday, July 30, to discuss what should be done about the problem of juvenile delinquency. Action was postponed until the September meeting. Facing the camera (from left to right), Marjorie Gluckstein, James Alstrom, Hugh Watson (Vice

Chairman), Ed Flood, Coordinator of the Program for Oakland County, and Dick LaFore, the Committee's case worker. Backs to camera (from left to right), Robert Bush, Sgt. Robert Deadman, Juvenile Officer for Farmington Police, and Ptm. Norman Sainbrook, Juvenile Officer for the Township Police.

## Recreation Commission Field Day Big Success

The Farmington Area Recreation Commission held its annual Field Day this past Friday at City Park. Playground sites that participated included eight from the Farmington area and two from Clarenceville.

A total of 247 young boys and girls competed in contests. The morning was spent in competition on an individual basis. Prizes were awarded to first, second, and third place winners in each of the scheduled events which were broken down into four age groups.

The afternoon was utilized by the playing of baseball games in a tournament that saw Beechview playfield defeat Clarenceville's Edgewood playground 5 to 4.

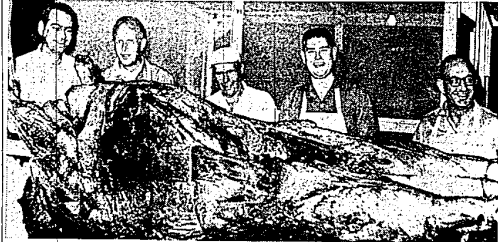
The response of the merchants in both the Farmington and Clarenceville areas to the Commission's request for donations was described as "gratifying." The prizes awarded to winners of events "did much to help make the day a more pleasant one for the children to enjoy," according to E. N. Bagris, Director of the program.

Among the prizes awarded to the youngsters were: baseball bats, softballs, pizza pies, ice cream, toy cars, free bowling, badminton sets, boxes of candy, and candy bars by the dozen.

This coming Friday, August 6, will mark the conclusion of the Commission's program. A trip to Bob-La Island is planned for this occasion. Buses will load at the respective playground sites from 9 to 9:30 a.m. Tickets can be purchased from counselors at the playgrounds. The fee is 75 cents for those eight to 11 years of age and 1.50 for those 12 to 15. This does not cover the expense of entertainment on the island. Buses should arrive back at about 6:30 p.m.



**PRETTY MERIDETH** Lawton, 17, of Southfield High, is surprised to hear herself named winner of the title Miss Founders Festival. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Lawton, of 17148 Metrose, Southfield.



**MEN BEHIND THE OX** Roast (from left), took place in the Farmington Center, during the Founders Festival. Bill O'Connor, Douglas Horst, Bill Everhart, and Harold Detlinger. The event.

## Hall Takes City to Court

Farmington Township Supervisor Curt Hall will have the City of Farmington in the Oakland County Circuit Court on Monday, August 9. It will be a show cause hearing before Judge Clark Adams, on a temporary restraining order to restrain the City from collecting

what it regards as Hall's share of the special assessment on the parking lot on the north side of Grand River.

Despite this legal stumbling block, however, the City moved ahead with its construction plans. It has agreed to award two asphalt contracts. The basic contract on Thomas

Street, on the parking lot north of Grand River, and on the parking lot west of Farmington Road, will go to the Stolaruk Asphalt Paving Co. Its bid of \$23,320 was the lowest of five. Noble Paving, with a bid of \$35, was the lowest bidder on the Cloverdale School Magic Square.

The City will immediately award the contract to Noble Paving. But it will postpone awarding the contract to Stolaruk, pending the outcome of the show-cause hearing Monday.

## Council's Meetings' Sweetness Fading

The honeymoon may be over for the Farmington City Council. With the election of two new Councilmen, John Allen and Ralph Yoder, and the defeat of Councilman Henry Ford, who was at longhanded with his peers, things were all sweetness and light until the latest meeting, on Monday, August 2.

There were several verbal exchanges on Monday, none of them bitter, but they seemed to reveal philosophical differences between the members. The principle exchange came over an issue which at first had seemed ludicrous, but which turned out to be quite serious. It was over the possibility raised at the previous meeting by Councilman Allen that the DPW be uniformed.

When it came up again, Allen brought out the good points. It would be a saving for the men. They would look

sharper.

It is harder for a man with an identifiable uniform on to goof off.

Councilman Hugo Pederson said he would be for the idea only if the men themselves wanted it. Councilman Howard Thayer said he didn't know if he was for it or not but that he thought it would be silly to ask the men whether they wanted the uniforms or not.

Ralph Yoder came out emphatically against the idea. He said: "If you want to do something for them, give them the \$2 a week (the amount they would save on clothes)."

The question was tabled.

Another Allen suggestion set off a brief flap. Allen expressed the opinion that the Council's agenda might possibly be streamlined. He had earlier urged a streamlining of the general conduct of meetings.

Thayer praised John Dismar for having streamlined the agenda considerably during his tenure as City Manager. However, he conceded further improvement might be possible.

Pederson, like Thayer a veteran of the Council, said flatly that the present agenda was a good one.

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**THE NATIONAL BANK OF Detroit's** float in the Farmington Founders Festival parade was held on Grand River, in Farmington, on Saturday morning, July 31. The floaters are an organization of young ladies 12 to 20 years old, who are relatives of members of the Masonic Order.



**JOB'S DAUGHTERS** had this colorful float in the Farmington Founders Festival parade, July 31. The floaters are an organization of young ladies 12 to 20 years old, who are relatives of members of the Masonic Order.

★ Free ★  
Northland  
Playhouse  
★ Tickets ★

If your name appears in the Want-Ad section of the Observer Newspapers, you win two free tickets to an hilarious performance of "Ladies Night in a Turkish Bath," currently playing at the Northland Playhouse. Check the Want-Ads now. You'll be glad you did!