

# 'round the towns news The Birmingham Eccentric

LATHRUP • FRANKLIN • WING LAKE • GILBERT LAKE • WALNUT LAKE • FOXCROFT • W. &amp; E. BEVERLYS • THE BERKSHIRES • VALLEY WOODS • SOUTHFIELD, BLOOMFIELD &amp; W. BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIPS.

## An Editorial

### Govt. News Should Be Made Available to All

Last week reporters who cover Lathrup Village's council meetings were asked where and how they gathered the information that City Administrator Leonard A. Watchowski had been inquiring into purchase of Southfield School District land on the west side of Southfield between Margate and Santa Ann.

As explained then, the Southfield board of education meeting at which Watchowski appeared, was a public meeting covered by an Eccentric reporter.

But even had it not been a public meeting we feel that people of Lathrup—the taxpayers—had a right to know what their city officials were contemplating. Let me explain, here, that we see nothing wrong in the inquiry made by Watchowski. The land, under township rule, is completely surrounded by Lathrup, yet that city has no control over it. We believe the city should be concerned with what happens to that land.

TOO MANY TIMES, it seems, city officials—not only in Lathrup—but in all communities, are under the impression that reporters have a right to know what is going on only if it is announced at a public meeting or given out in a statement by a "qualified" public official.

Some people in Lathrup would muzzle the city administrator because "he is not the person who should give out such important information." Under the impression that what would happen if a taxpayer were to ask the city administrator, the dog catcher, the patrolman or the Governor of Michigan a question which pertained to operations handled by that official in the course of his duties?

Don't you think that—as a taxpayer—you or your neighbor should be given as good an answer as is available by that official?

A NEWSPAPER reporter is only a representative of that taxpayer. People buy his newspaper because they want to know what is happening in their community—not just what their elected officials want them to know.

Too many times elected officials, wrapped up completely in the chore of government, forget that they are only servants of the people and not their masters. If the present officials were NOT in office, would they not want to know what is happening to their government, and to their tax money?

Too many times people, including elected officials, stand up in a public meeting and say "this is off the record," and go on to detail something that would be of vital concern to the taxpayers affected by that information.

LET IT BE SAID here, that newspaper reporters are NOT bound to honor any such "off the record" statement. If made publicly, a newspaperman is required to report it as a matter of course. If made privately to a newspaperman, it should be understood before the news source starts talking that what he has to say will be held in strict confidence.

We must admit, in fairness, that public officials, from time to time, draw unjust criticism from taxpayers because some newspaperman inadvertently has misquoted or misrepresented that official in his account of a story.

To correct this, we suggest contacting the newspaper in question. In most instances of this kind a reporter will be unaware of his mistake and would be happy to have a more correct version.

DO NOT, HOWEVER, confuse misquoting with honest difference of opinion as to how the account happened. Two people who see or hear the same thing will interpret it as it relates to them.

That is one reason why a newspaper reporter, who is supposed to be objective and removed from emotional involvement, should be able to give a better report of the account, if he is supplied with all the facts. Supplying these facts is the job of our public officials. A newspaperman also has training in gathering and presenting information that the average person does not have.

Most newspapers seek to operate to the end that they can aid in bringing about the greatest good to the greatest number of human beings. This means that not only must they print "everything that's fit to print," as the New York Times puts it, but they also must know when to delay, or even withhold certain types of news—all this being done to protect society itself.

NEWSPAPERS are only human institutions. People who get out newspapers, can, and make mistakes. But the honest newspaperman knows that there are two basic kinds of mistakes: one comes from the head, the other from the heart.

He also knows that most people will pardon a mistake "from the head," but never "from the heart." Your average newspaperman is sympathetic to public officials and their many problems; he wants to help them in their efforts to build a better community, a happier society.

However, he believes that his first and dominant responsibility and duty is to the people who are governed, the people who pay taxes to support his newspaper. He believes that only the people are the masters; the public officials are the servants. . . . the newspaperman remembers this wonderful Biblical statement: "And whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:27)

This Week

Gilbert Lake

Column News

in Section 3, Page 4

My Neighbors



"Fasten your safety belt, Horace!"

## Sidelights

By WILLIAM H. THOMAS

FIRST OFF, let's answer a question that many people are asking me. No, I am not the Bill Thomas that has been involved in that Flint shooting which for the past 10 days has been making headlines in all newspapers, although I do come from that area. Many people have jokingly asked that question, (I say jokingly) but from the looks I've received from some, I am not so sure they are joking. But like the other Bill Thomas, I maintain "I'm innocent."

SOMEONE ELSE'S troubles always appear a bit funnier than your own, and so was with a checkmate that I received the news that one young man, emerging from the Lathrup village court room this week, uttered what many have thought after paying a traffic ticket. Almost to himself the youth said, "If you did something like that, I'd probably hang you." He'll probably slow down though, next time he goes through Lathrup.

IN THE UNUSUAL name-occupation department, I submit (type out comment) the following which was a sign on the back of a truck traveling south on Telegraph "Jack Goose and Co. Beef Packers."

AND IN THE same vein, I note that a member of the Lathrup village Tree Committee is Alvin R. Plamtree, 1836 Bungalow. I'm not that he's just a good job, along with the rest of the committee.

THOUGHTLESS THOUGHT: "It seems to take a lifetime to grow old." Not for some people, it does. Especially when you're at that stage of life where people can call you "elderly" (or so I've been told.)

## School Board Picks Village School Site

SOUTHFIELD — School board selected a tentative school site on 12 mile road to serve the Cranbrook development, Monday night.

The board rejected the proposal of Cranbrook developer, Rodney Lockwood, to build a school on the 20 acre tract on the north side of Southfield road, south of 12 mile road.

Lockwood appeared before the board three weeks ago with the suggestion they build a school on the 20 acre tract when only 10 acres would then use the east 10 acres for a shopping center.

THE DEAL would have hinged on the legality of the board to condemn the 20 acre tract when only 10 acres would be used for the school site.

Lockwood presented the 12 mile road site as an alternate if the board didn't approve of the dump site. It is located on the north side of 12 mile, west of Southfield.

Other action taken by the board included approval of bids for the 12 mile road site. The board also approved of architect's plans for the Nine Mile junior high school and a 300 foot extension of possible school sites.

LOW GENERAL contracting bid for Brace job was submitted by DeMare Bros. at \$22,850, low bid by J. D. Naylor & Sons, \$17,775 and low electrical bid by Electric Co., \$22,449.

Bids will be opened at a special board meeting Monday night.

The board approved the plans for Nine Mile junior high school as drawn up by O'Dell, Hewlett & Luckenbach. In an effort to keep the cost down, the board made four classrooms and two science room alternates in case funds were lacking for the project. The board has approved a \$800,000 to spend on the building.

ARTHUR J. STEPHENS was authorized by the board to negotiate for school sites in section 18 of Southfield. Stephens has aided the Berkley school district in acquiring land and is now negotiating for a site for the Angling Road school addition will be opened at a special board meeting, Feb. 27.

## March 1 Paving Petition Deadline Reminder Given

LATHRUP — Leonard A. Watchowski, city administrator, reminded residents this week that they only have until March 1 to file petitions to have paving completed this year.

Otherwise, councilmen may hold off the paving until 1957.

Watchowski explained that if the petitions were bunched together, lower cost paving could be expected. He also allows time for necessary engineering, letting contracts and issuance of bonds before the paving season gets too far underway.

## Reverse Charter Stand

EAST BEVERLY — Greenfield-Beverly Hills Improvement Association approved a resolution calling for active participation by the group in election of charter commissioners and selection of a charter commission advisory board.

This was a reversal of the position taken by the association which last Fall had decided to attempt to beat down incorporation of Southfield township by defeating all charters presented.

George W. Murphy, association president, cautioned, however, that this does not mean that the group is solidly backing any charter that may be presented by the next charter commission.

THE RESOLUTION reads, in part: "Approval of such a policy does not infer that our association is committed to approval of any particular charter."

About 100 persons were on hand at the Beverly School Monday night to hear Henry M. DeMeyer, township trustee, Marvin R. Marsh, president of citizens for Southfield Township, and Mrs. Fannie Adams, township clerk, address the group.

BOTH DEMEYER and Marsh had opposed the last charter, but DeMeyer, only because he thought the charter was a bad one. Marsh, on the other hand, heads a group which has voiced disapproval of incorporation, but the present was told that he had modified his viewpoint after studying Southfield township plan.

Mrs. Adams told the group what they might expect if they were left out of Southfield as a city.

According to Murphy, those who fear that since they could not clearly see the area's outcome should they be left out of incorporation, they would be along with incorporation to see if it could provide them with a government.

Both DeMeyer and Marsh said that they were not in favor of a reasonable amount of services at a comparatively low tax rate.

## Drive-In Theater Request Referred To Planning Bd.

SOUTHFIELD — Request for change of zoning to allow construction of a drive-in theater south of Northwestern highway west of Lahser, was referred to the township planning commission for study by planning consultant David Geer.

A similar request last year by a resident of the north side of the 21-acre parcel known as the Noyes farm, was turned down. The 21-acre parcel, covering 635 feet, is zoned commercial 250 feet deep, and behind this it is zoned residential.

Entrance to the theater, if granted, would be from Northwestern, and the 21-acre parcel would take care of cars waiting to enter.

Entry and exit would be facilitated by a drive-in theater and a parking zone which would be built by Oakland county road commission.

Bids will be approved at a special board meeting Monday night.

## Waive Height Limit On Office Building

SOUTHFIELD — Board of Appeals waived height limitations as requested by Mr. and Mrs. R. H. McManus of 16109 W. Eight Mile, to build a commercial structure six stories high.

McManus said the building would be used for commercial purposes and is located on three acres at the Eight Mile address.

## CALENDAR

TODAY  
West Beverly Hills Garden Club, 1 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. meeting, 8 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. meeting, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY  
Lathrup 7th Grade dance class at 8 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. dance, 8:30 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. dance, 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY  
Lathrup 7th Grade dance class at 8 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. dance, 8:30 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. dance, 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY  
Franklin Community Assn's President's Ball at 8 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. dance, 8:30 p.m.  
Lathrup P.T.A. dance, 8:30 p.m.

MONDAY  
Valley Woods Wm. meeting 1:30 p.m.  
Birmingham Community House, 8 p.m.  
Southfield Optimist, 8:30 p.m.

TUESDAY  
Valley Woods Wm. meeting 1:30 p.m.  
Birmingham Community House, 8 p.m.  
Southfield Optimist, 8:30 p.m.

# Incorporation Sets Date To End

## Southfield Hearing Continued

Decrees identical to those issued against three other communities in the Evergreen Interceptor Authority last year, were entered Monday against Lathrup and Oakland County Drain Commissioner Ralph A. Main in the latest effort by the State Water Resources Commission to halt Rouge river pollution.

Main was cited because he controls the Acacia drain which serves parts of Beverly Hills subdivision in Southfield township.

Hearings against Southfield, however, were continued because of Southfield's unsettled political condition.

"They delayed entering a decree against Southfield because there is no head (government) to enter a decree against," said Harry N. Dell, Southfield attorney who successfully fended off the decree because of the township's political "in between" status.

DATE SET for Lathrup and Main to have courts of action mapped out is May 1. By July 1 specifications should be prepared, and Oct. 1 is the date set by decree for an authority after it is decreed, whatever they might be, to eliminate pollution of the Rouge, must be completed by Dec. 1, 1957.

Last Aug. 29 decrees with the same dates were entered against Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield townships, which were pressed by State Water Resources Commission through the State Attorney General's office.

EVERETT F. HAYES, Lathrup City attorney, and Oakland County Corporation Counsel Harry J. Merritt, raised the question as to whether any community could pull out of an authority after it was established.

Hayes contended as did Merritt, that unless Main could force communities to remain in an authority after it was formed, that such projects as the Evergreen Interceptor could fall apart as various out of an authority after it was formed. No opinion was given to the attorney's question.

HAYES ALSO cited Act 342 of the Public Acts of 1939 which established use of authorities such as the Interceptor authority.

"The Act contemplates union in the problem of sanitary sewerage," Hayes said, adding that some type of interceptor or sewer plan must be approved by the county circuit judge H. Russell Holland, who heard the evidence.

Lathrup and Main would be tied together for solution of the Rouge pollution problem, Hayes said.

"They talked the same last August and they'll talk the same next August unless a decree is issued," said Miss Florence Clement, of the attorney general's office.

"THIS IS no minor problem in Lathrup Village. It is a public nuisance and a health problem," said Miss Clement who stated that a motion, filed last July, was adjourned on plea of Hayes. "Mr. Hayes fooled us and had it held over," said Miss Clement.

"It was our contention that there was no violation last August," said Hayes, adding that he had been declared set by a decree entered against Lathrup in 1954.

The decree was set aside because of the possibility of time extensions but Holland warned that every possible effort would be made to enforce the decree and to obtain a permanent injunction against the township.

SINCE The decree against the three northern communities last August, they with Troy have been making plans for enlarging the Birmingham sewerage treatment plant. Their rights could be quickly shifted back to the Evergreen Interceptor sewer, the plan which all agree is best for the abatement of Rouge pollution.

The interceptor would run a line from 14 Mile with main sewer branches, down to connect with Detroit's sewage system.

LATHRUP and Southfield, including the Acacia drain, are a part of the authority which has been held up by Southfield township's inability to indent the future of the area which already has voted incorporation and has but to okay a charter to make it a city.

A bill, allowing townships, in a situation such as Southfield, to be introduced to the State legislature this week.

INSIDE THE ECCENTRIC  
Schools Plan Driver-Training Expansion  
Section 1, Page 1

Society  
Gilbert Lake Column  
Section 3, Page 4

Brownies Skate at Model Paper  
Section 4, Page 1

School  
Highlander Staff Publishes Model Paper  
Section 2, Pages 4, 5 & 6

Church  
Section 4, Page 6, 7

## Figure \$765,000 Charged With Manslaughter In Auto Death

SOUTHFIELD — Don L. Swanson, 24068 Pennsylvania, was named to a seat on the Township board which was vacated by Eugene Swen when he took over the supervisor's post.

Township trustees named Swanson Tuesday night, and at the same time appointed Hurn J. Burnett, 17038 Kirkshire, and Edward I. Arbitter, 16281 Pennsylvania, to fill two of three vacancies on the township zoning board.

Swanson, member of the township charter commission and elected defacto mayor when the charter was defeated, has been active in political affairs, both locally and in the State. He is general manager of the Michigan State Fair.

ARBITTER, Wayne University and Lawrence Institute of Technology graduate, has lived in Southfield three and one-half years, and is an industrial sales engineer.

Burnett, an employee of Harry J. Saffrin in Detroit, has been active in church activities in his community.

A post thought vacated by Roy E. Grunwell of 20834 Grunwell, was not open because Grunwell's appointment does not expire until July.

Another vacancy on the zoning board will be filled at the next township board meeting.

## Township Builder Found Guilty in Fatal Auto Crash

SOUTHFIELD — Morris H. Wilkinson, 22476 Telegraph, a contractor, was found guilty of negligent homicide Monday in the deaths of two Detroit area residents as result of a four-car auto crash Aug. 1.

Wilkinson was placed on two years probation, ordered to pay \$1,600, and was suspended from driving for two years, with an additional five-year suspension recommended.

Don H. Barlow, 43, of Lincoln Park, and Mrs. Vestina Slaydon, 60, of Detroit, were killed when the cars driven by Wilkinson and Barlow crashed into a car driven by Slaydon.

Barlow was driving on Telegraph road in Dearborn township.

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Section 1, Page 1

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Section 3, Page 4

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Section 2, Pages 4, 5 & 6

Church  
Section 4, Page 6, 7

## We Have Seen . . .

. . . a fat contented cat, purring by the hot air furnace in a Franklin grocery store. Very seldom are cats seen in stores, but they used to be part of the equipment.

. . . a teenager carefully and cautiously wheeling his bike down a snowy township road last week. Balanced precariously across the handle bars were his skis and ski poles.

. . . big rooms, big fireplaces, big doors and big dinos in Lathrup's aptly named House in the Woods.

. . . dismantling of the old brick factory on Inkster road below 15 Mile. The factory for more years than the oldest resident can remember has been making fireplace brick and the date inscribed on the adjacent farm house says 1835.

—RAS