

AS WE SEE IT

Salem purchase of maps looks like good move

Progress comes slowly but surely to Salem Township.

The township took a giant step forward by teaming up with South Lyon for library service. It also has brought sewer service to the hamlet after 30 years of people saying it was needed.

Now the township has joined the computer age by purchasing computerized base maps from Washtenaw County as part of a program to standardize all government mapping requirements.

Salem buying into this plan is a vastly underrated step for the township. The township is not simply buying some new toy to keep the office staff. The county is using this standardized system to put all of its governments on the same page.

The township now has the base maps. Next month it will receive overlay maps for the whole county showing such things as real estate parcels, roads, section lines and numbers, and hydrogeology.

That's only the beginning. Other possibilities for future use include soil maps, zoning maps, or such esoteric uses as keeping track of hazardous materials storage. Planning, zoning and development decisions will become easier for all concerned, since the information will be at the staff's fingertips.

Perhaps one of the most tangible benefits for local residents is the fact that you won't need to make a trip to county offices in Ann Arbor to obtain information about land use or ownership. Salem township staff will see this benefit as well.

We're certain the usefulness of the purchase will become more and more evident as time goes on.

The economic wisdom of purchasing the maps from Washtenaw County is self-evident. The township could never afford to produce its own maps at the rate the county will charge, 80 cents per parcel. Just creating and printing a single map on paper costs far more.

We would like to suggest, however, that the township may have been a little short-sighted when it voted two months ago not to fund training for the staff members who will use the maps. Granted, the board had not decided at the time whether it would purchase the maps, and it seemed unwise to pay for training that might not be put to use.

But now that the township has made the decision to purchase the maps, we think the board should revisit the issue of training. It makes little sense to spend the money on an all-new system without giving staff the necessary tools to put it to best use. We feel certain that with proper training, staff will be able to maximize the value of this latest purchase, to the benefit of all residents and property owners.

Marine Corps hears tale of War Dog

A favorite South Lyon Herald story of mine surfaced again last week when I got a call out of the blue about the War Dog.

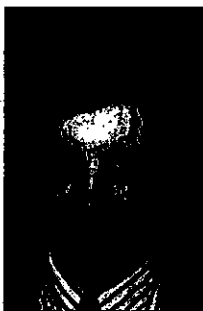
If you'll remember, we ran our first story about the War Dog in January of 1996. The War Dog is a memorial to dogs who served in the military in World Wars I and II which was erected in a Lyon Township pet cemetery. The pet cemetery, known as the Happy Hunting Ground Memorial Park for Pets, sits just south of Eleven Mile Road on Milford Road, but it has not operated since 1975.

The Happy Hunting Ground was created by Steve Elko, a Highland Park veterinarian, in the 1930s, and he ran it until his death. In 1946, Elko created the memorial with help from veterinarians, humane societies and the like.

Sometime in December of 1995, the life-size bronze statue of a dog which stood atop the six-foot granite memorial was stolen. Almost two years later, in November of 1997, two boys exploring some fields found it, none the worse for wear, and one of them remembered the story we'd run. Police returned the War Dog to the Elko family.

That chapter of the story has kind of a bitter-sweet ending. Though the statue is back in the family's hands, they have not replaced it atop the memorial, perhaps fearing more vandalism.

Well, just last Wednesday, I got a call from



RICK BYRNE

archivist Pat Mullen at the Marine Corps Research Center in Quantico, Va. She was going over some old copies of Leatherneck magazine, a Marine Corps publication, and found a story that was a first-person account by a young Ohio girl whose family donated their dog for service in the Marines in World War II.

Many dogs were volunteered for such service, and this dog, a Doberman pinscher named Sparks, served heroically. Unfortunately, the war experience rendered many of the dogs unfit to return to a family lifestyle. While the girl's family never got Sparks back, the dog's Marine trainer adopted him and kept him after the war.

Near the end of the story, the girl tells how the trainer who adopted Sparks settled in Rochester, Michigan. When the memorial was dedicated at the Happy Hunting Ground in 1946, he and Sparks attended. The trainer sent her a newspaper clipping of the event, and this is what she wrote.

"(The clipping) was dated August 1, 1946, and there, beneath the front-page headline, 'Rochester-owned dog in unusual ceremony,' were several pictures of Sparks with his new master. Sparks looked every bit a champion - healthy, alert and, above all, happy with and obedient to his owner."

"The 'unusual ceremony' described in the newspaper was the dedication of Michigan's mon-

ument to war dogs, near South Lyon. In one of America's biggest pet cemeteries. The war dog memorial was described as a large bronze statue of a dog standing over a fallen rifle, the sculpture on a massive granite base. Platoon Sergeant Sparks had been there to help dedicate the monument.

"It was a fitting assignment for Sparks, who had gone from playful puppy to War Dog hero with the Marines - serving his country throughout the Pacific in World War II. Bougainville ... Guadalcanal ... Guam ... Okinawa ... and finally, Japan."

"That was the last word we had of Sparks, but it's not difficult to guess where he is. Someday I hope to visit South Lyon, Mich."

The folks at Quantico just wanted to know a little about our memorial, as they were gathering information on war dog memorials. Ms. Mullen told me there were a couple around the country, and the only Marine one is in Knoxville, Tenn. There is no national memorial, though, she said.

I sent her our stories, and related to her that the statue had not been put back. She suggested that since the cemetery no longer operates, and the family might be concerned about theft, that they should consider donating it to the city or township.

"Something like that should be put someplace conspicuous so that everyone can enjoy it," she said.

I have to agree. Something so honorable shouldn't be hidden. Anyone else feel the same?

Rick Byrne is editor of the South Lyon Herald. Call him at 437-2011 or e-mail him at byrne@hl.homecom.net.

SCOTT BENEDICT

Polly wanna piece of birthday cake



Miki Burton, owner of the Pet Stop in the Brookdale Shopping center, brought over Charlie the macaw to wish Muffy, the Hallmark store dogs a happy second birthday. Geri Krollckl, the owner of Geri's Hallmark, is Muffy's owner, or better yet, Muffy's employer.

Her first Pumpkinfest isn't really her first

One of my favorite things to do as a kid was to go to Pumpkinfest in Sycamore, Ill. Classes would actually take field trips to see the hundreds of decorated pumpkins on the courthouse lawn. There were always plenty of yummy treats being sold up and down the sidewalk. The highlight, of course, was the parade. We watched it at my friend's aunt's house where plenty of chili and hot cider was being served.

When I came here, I was so excited to learn that South Lyon hosts its own annual Pumpkinfest. Unfortunately, I was unable to make it to last year's fest. I was getting married in Wisconsin that weekend. (Missing Pumpkinfest was unfortunate, not the marriage part.)

So, this year, I took in the full experience of Pumpkinfest. As I was walking downtown with my umbrella in hand, jacket zipped up and gloves on, I was skeptical that there was going to be much of a turnout for the parade. I was pleasantly surprised when I reached the four



AMY GIBBONS

corners of Lake and Lafayette streets to witness the sea of umbrellas anxiously anticipating the parade. Neither rain nor sleet nor snow would keep these Pumpkinfest faithful from watching the parade.

Despite the gloomy weather, the parade participants were enthusiastic as they threw candy and waved. The parade was pretty typical with floats, old cars, the marching band, cub scout and girls scout troops and of course, equestrian units. One parade participant in particular caught my eye - a cute little pony wearing a witch's hat and a sheet with pumpkins on it. The best part of watching a parade is watching the reactions of the little people watching it. Their eyes get big, they point and they tug at their parents' clothing and say "Look at that, Mommy."

After the parade, I walked back home and I was amazed at the congestion on Pontiac Trail on a Saturday afternoon. I didn't fully appreci-

ate the attendance Pumpkinfest generated until I got to Showerman's and saw every parking spot filled. Cars even lined the alley behind the shopping center.

I decided to wait until Sunday and fairer weather to take in the rest of what Pumpkinfest had to offer. Early Sunday afternoon, my husband and I walked to Showerman's to get some money out of the ATM before heading over to Pumpkinfest. The machine was out of money, so we walked over to the Total gas station. That machine was out of money, so we walked to Michigan National Bank. Finally, we hit the jackpot.

The event attracted as many if not more people than it did Saturday. It probably took us a good hour to wind our way through all the craft booths where we managed to get a little early Christmas shopping done.

The lines for food and rides were long, and the Kiwanis' concession stand had run out of some items such as donuts and tuna sandwiches - all proof of a successful Pumpkinfest.

I didn't get to see the full range of family entertainment, but I did catch part of the Barnyard Express show. The kids had fun as they learned how to milk a goat and interesting facts

Continued on next page

STAFF

Vice President/	
General Manager	Richard Perlberg
Executive Editor	Phil Jerome
Editor	Rick Byrne
Editor	Jillian Bogater
Staff Reporter	Amy Gibbons
Staff Reporter	Kevin Shopshire
Staff Reporter	Doug Mills
Sports Reporter	Julie Kempainen
Staff Photographer	Scott Benedict
Staff Photographer	Hal Gould
Sales Director	Michael Preville
Sales Manager	Lisa Dranginis

The South Lyon
Herald

Business, news, and advertising offices located at
101 N. Lafayette, South Lyon, MI 48178.
Telephone (313) 437-2011. Fax 437-9460.