

**YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER —  
Serving the Saline Area for 40 Years**

# The Saline Reporter

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## Otto's Shoppe Still Ranks As a 'Big Cheese' in Town

By Renee Lapham Collins

The exterior of Otto's Cheese Shoppe, a mainstay on North Ann Arbor Street for more than 40 years, hasn't changed much since Fred Otto opened the doors in 1948. But inside, the Otto family—91-year-old Cecil and her son, Wayne, a retired math teacher with 32 years in Detroit's public schools—are testimony to the changing times.

"IN THE OLD DAYS, you could get all kinds of cheese from overseas," reports Wayne, who first introduced his parents to the cheese business. "European cheese wasn't pasteurized then. Now, the government won't let cheese that hasn't been pasteurized into the country. And, many of our old suppliers are no longer in business.

Business hasn't been as good as it was in Otto's heyday, either.

Today, "people always seem to be in a hurry," and, with most wives and mothers working outside the home, convenience foods and supermarket cheeses have gained popularity. The demand for the old-style aged cheddars and gourmet cheeses has decreased, says Wayne.

"WE WERE THE ONLY gourmet cheese shop in Washtenaw County then," Wayne recalls. "North Ann Arbor used to be the busiest road in town before U.S. 23 was built. It was direct to Ann Arbor, to the University, football games, and hospitals. Back then, the Jaycees would sell 600-1,000 boxed chicken dinners up on the corner to people who were on their way to a football game."

But, the story of Otto's really begins before Fred Otto became the county's "Cheese King."

According to his son, Fred bought the farm land property on North Ann Arbor Street and built his shop, which consisted of freezer lockers, and began processing beef,

pork, lamb, and other meats. Customers rented lockers for \$10-20 per year. The lockers, described by Wayne as "6½-cubic-foot safety deposit boxes," did a booming business.

"It was wartime and people used to come from all over," Cecil recalls.

"IT WAS A BIG BUSINESS then," Wayne cuts in. "People needed stamps to buy meat. There were five meat markets in town and they all were busy."

But, under President Harry Truman's administration, the "bottom dropped out" of the meat business. Wayne remembers that the supplies of meat became plentiful and home freezers became household fixtures.

"The real demand for lockers decreased," he says.

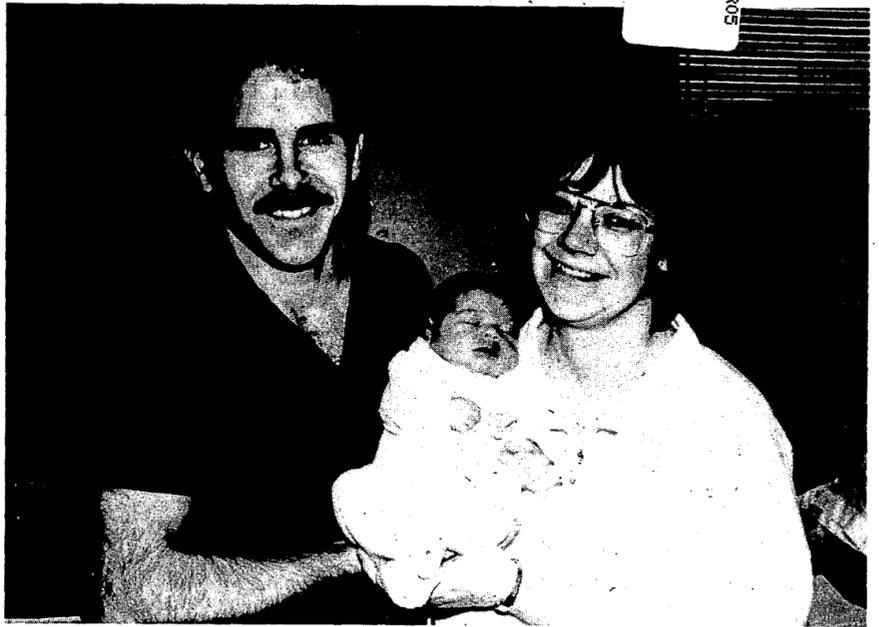
Fred shut down the meat locker business in the late '50s. Wayne, who was teaching math in Dearborn at the time, took a trip to Canada and discovered Ontario's Black Diamond cheddar cheese. When he returned to Saline, he convinced his parents to go into the gourmet cheese business.

FRED, A NATIVE of New Jersey, started out with a restaurant on Packard Road in the heart of Ann Arbor where he catered to students. Wayne remembers that students could live for a week on \$4.50 then. Fred lost the restaurant when Wayne became ill and spent a year in the hospital and Fred returned to Saline to start over.

Wayne went to college at the Ypsilanti Normal School, now EMU, and to U-M, where he wanted to study aeronautical engineering. But, there were 7,000 engineering graduates that year, so he decided to pursue a teaching degree. His sister, Dorothy, also is a teacher and lives in Allen Park.

CECIL, BORN IN Montpelier, Ohio, recalls how she first met Fred.

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TARAH ANN BONDY, Saline's first baby of the New Year, may well sport the proverbial "ink in her veins" that runs through those in the printing profession.

Tarah, a 5:20 a.m. arrival on January 5 at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, is the first child of Jill and Greg Bondy of Saline. Father Greg, a Manchester High product, is head of printing operations for The Reporter Papers and, somewhat ironically, had the proud job of making sure this photo-story looked letter-perfect when it came off the press this Wednesday afternoon. Tarah's

mother is employed by Xycom in Saline.

Seven pounds and 9 ounces at birth, Tarah measured 20¼" upon arrival. Her grandparents are Jan and Charlie Dettling of Ann Arbor, and Shirley and William Bondy of Manchester. Tarah's great-grandparents are Hattie and Norman Neigebauer of Yale, Mich.

For the timely arrival, Tarah and her parents will share a host of prizes donated by area merchants participating in the First Baby Contest.



CECIL, a fixture at Otto's Cheese Shoppe in Saline.

## Saline School Board Debates Request for Increased Fees

By Renee Lapham Collins

A discussion on a request by architects TMP for additional money to cover costs incurred from several site plan revisions for the new Jensen School was halted after Saline School Board member Paul Meyer suggested that the issue might be more appropriately debated in executive session.

In a letter to Superintendent Maurice Conn, the architects reported that they were "currently completing the final update on the Jensen School site plan" to meet requirements set forth by the Saline Planning Commission, and requested the Board consider compensating the firm for additional manhours that exceeded original contract projections.

"We have expended over 350 hours in resolving these issues which converts to a billable fee amount of over \$17,000. We are, however, sensitive to the monetary constraints on the project and are therefore requesting compensation to cover only our bare costs of \$10,000," wrote TMP Vice-President Lawrence D. Morris.

The matter is expected to be reviewed further by the Board at its January 24 meeting.

Also Tuesday, Board President Chuck Clise noted in his opening remarks that he was "disappointed" with a letter appearing in *The Reporter* December 21 from the Saline Softball Association defending that organization's distribution of "rubber checks." In that same issue, Clise noted, the Saline Area Youth Baseball and Softball group submitted a letter to the community thanking it for support of the local little league program.

"The similarities between the two organizations stops at their names," Clise charged. "The S.A.Y.B. & S. and Paul Staley are always working to make things better while the other group is tearing things down. Adult baseball and softball should be self-supporting and not dependent on the community or the schools to underwrite their activities."

Board members also heard a report from Paula Haarer on the school food service program. Haarer, director of food service, stated that the program serves 70 percent of Saline's 3,000 students daily as well as 75 students at the Saline Christian School, and 45 senior citizens at the Saline and Milan senior centers three times per week. In addition, the staff caters 10 banquets and several meetings each year.

"We have scored above 90 on our health department rating and have rated highly with the state assessment program," said Haarer.

She added that the program is self-supporting, with the contracts outside the Saline schools helping keep unit costs down. Several Board members complimented Haarer and her staff on "a great food service program."

The Board also accepted the resignation of Dr. Gayle Nash from the Parent Advisory Committee for the Intermediate School District's Special Education Department and appointed Ms. Rebecca Stark to take her place.

Conn reported that he received a letter from Mr. and Mrs. William Hammons of Bemis Road requesting a property transfer from the Milan to the Saline district. No action was taken on the request. A property transfer re-

quest from the Dan Murray family was rejected by the Washtenaw Intermediate School District because the Murrays currently do not reside on the property that they wanted transferred. According to state regulations, persons requesting transfers must both own and reside on the property they wish to have transferred.

Board members adjourned to an executive session to discuss collective bargaining following the regular meeting.

## City Council Starts Anew

By Woodie Merchant

Newly elected City Council members, Bill Anderson, Connie Strait, and Gary Hahn, as well as Mayor Mark Hopper, were sworn in at the Monday evening Saline City Council meeting. Kenneth Bronson, chief judge of the 14th District Court, presided at the ceremony.

Judge Bronson, a former resident of Saline, addressed warm personal remarks to the Mayor and each of the Councilmembers.

Also at the meeting, Council confirmed the appointment of Councilman Anderson as Mayor Pro-Tem. Anderson, assistant vice-president of Commercial Lending with Great Lakes Bancorp of Ann Arbor, is the son of George Anderson, former mayor of Saline. Anderson, active with the Saline Lions Club, was appointed to Council in 1987 and was elected last fall to a two-year term on the municipal panel.

Following the swearing-in ceremony, Mayor Hopper addressed Council on the State of the City (see page 2a).

Other business included confirmation of appointments of Council, citizens and staff to City boards and commissions. A brief skirmish over TIFA and EDC appointments brought forth the comment from Councilman Hubert Beach, "No person should serve on any board or commission who is not a resident of Saline." However, Council confirmed all appointments with the exception of the Building Advisory Board. Confirmation of appointments to that board will be placed on the next Council agenda.

Council also set meeting dates for the coming year. Meetings will be held the first and third Mondays of each month at 7:30 p.m. with the following exceptions: the next meeting will be held January 23; the July meetings will be held on the 10th and 24th; and the September meetings will be held on the 11th and 25th. The first meeting in January 1990 will be held on the 8th.

FURTHER BUSINESS included approval of the new lease agreement for the mayor's car. For several years, Ford Motor Co. has leased, at a reduced cost, cars to the mayors of cities in which Ford plants are located. In the past several years, several Councilmembers have raised questions about the propriety of the lease agreement, even though there is no cost to the City. Under the lease

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