WATCHMAN
of the Tracks
A half-century of observing Ann Arbor's commonplace citizens and events who signify our unique quality of life.
by Dale R. Leslie
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of the Tracks
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The Ann Arbor originals are we.
50-years birthed in our community.
Diverse venues, parks, woods & stream
A "Quality of Life", that other's dream!

Cover photo by Joe Braun
Argo Park, Ann Arbor, MI.

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There are dedicated residents of the Ann Arbor area who set an example in empathy and compassion and became modest folk heroes. They usually remain behind the scenes and most have never received, nor desired, special recognition for their civic enthusiasm, support and notoriety. Many of whom are profiled in this series.

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TO My Mother- Grace Lucretia (Patrick) Leslie (1917-1998), a forward-thinking professional woman, whose dedication and business acumen led to co-founding and building, with my father, Leslie Office Supply, Inc. into a $3 million annual revenue generating corporation. She was a pioneer in an era when women workers were not afforded the respect of management positions, nor the salaries, of their male counterparts. Mom relished hiring ambitious young people, male and female, including countless relatives and acquaintances, to their first job and molding them into productive workers with marketable skills. This was her quiet legacy. Oh, she was proud of her Patrick Irish heritage but kept her age pressed against her breast never revealing it.

TO My Father- Richard D. Leslie (1917-2009), a much-admired, life-long Christian Samaritan, with a remarkable, humanitarian legacy including the last 17 years (1992-2009) as a resident of Glacier Hills Retirement Community (GHRC) in Ann Arbor, MI. In 2007, he was presented the prestigious Mauer Award for exceptional volunteer service to GHRC.

Dad's daily routine included visiting and transporting GHRC nursing patients in-house in wheel-chairs and devoting extra attention to a blind resident especially at mealtime.

I am proud of my father, who inspired by my grandparents and his siblings and through faithful membership in the Kiwanis and the Ann Arbor Westminster Presbyterian Church, actively spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and when necessary, chose words.

Life's irony? I was proud watching my father as an over-the-top caregiver at Glacier Hills Retirement Center but I desired a closer relationship and a more active mentorship to his grandchildren. I try to develop deep personal relationships with my two sons, Drew's wife, Jessica, and my grandson, Thad. I love my Dad. I miss him daily. But, my regret is we never shared our innermost, thoughts and beliefs. Nor verbally acknowledged the love we had for each other in our heart and mind.
A Simple "Yes" Triggered Life-Changing Events on a Family Farm.

What happens when two Depression-era farm families begin to share chores and the shelter of a homestead?

A whole series of life-changing events.

It was 1934. By God's grace most Michigan farms were self-sufficient with food, water, livestock and an ample supply of split logs to fuel their pot-bellied stoves. It was the era of the Great Depression and most of the nation's family knees had buckled, becoming destitute. Meanwhile, Dan and Grace Patrick of White Oak Township near Dansville, pondered an attractive offer from their son-in-law, a farmer, Ivan Galpin who resided in Superior Township on Plymouth Road, near Dixboro. The Patrick clan consisted of parents Dan and Grace and seven children; one boy and six girls.
Ivan and his wife Gladys Patrick Galpin needed the senior Patrick (Grandpa Dan) to help work the growing farm. Ivan was very knowledgeable about farming and he applied his college education from Michigan Agricultural College (Michigan State) to his crops and cows.

Grandpa Dan was a horse whisperer and his team of strong horses responded to an experienced man pulling the rein, a precious commodity to any farm.

So wife, Grace, and three daughters and their son oversaw the move into the second floor of the large farmhouse at 6820 Plymouth Road, the Galpin Homestead. (Current photo of the Centennial Farm is on the previous page) Dan Patrick would help ride herd on the vast Galpin farm in exchange for a warm home, food and security for his family.

Two of the Patrick daughters, Grace and Wilma (Billie), needed a ride to the Ypsilanti High School when classes began in the fall. It was said among the farm families that Richard Leslie of the nearby hamlet of Dixboro had a car and he would be driving to school. His sole passenger was Clinton (Bud) Leslie, his brother. As dawn broke on the first school day, Richard and Bud were cruising down Plymouth Road and screeched to a halt at the foot of the Galpin driveway. Richard honked the horn. Shortly, two attractive young women walked the 30 yards to the Leslie car.
Both Richard and Bud saw stars as they helped their passengers hop on board. It was just a few years later, that my father Richard married my mother Grace and later my Uncle Bud married Aunt Billie. Two brothers married two sisters.


Dan Patrick, Jr. met his future wife (Eleanor) at a dance above the Dixboro store on Plymouth Road. Another romance blossomed later between the youngest Patrick sister, Merna, and a Navy seaman, Roger Francis Place.

These wonderful love stories resulted in long and storied marriages for the four couples who got busy and produced a total of nine offspring. Richard and Grace Leslie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 25, 1990.

If Dan Patrick had declined Ivan Galpin's invitation to move from White Oak Township to the Galpin farm, these inspirational lives of love and marriage, compassion, the sharing of life's burdens and joys in marriage would never have happened nor been lived by this author and my cousins.

*Dale Leslie enjoys his cousins and their spouses immensely. And to think how these events unfolded and led to the evolution of his diverse family is a blessing from God.*
Your Grandfather Leslie’s Prayer

“Thad, do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, in the time and places you can and remain dedicated to His service as long as you can.”

- John Wesley, 18th Century English Theologian (paraphrased)

"Oh, that Grandpa!"
His stories are so funny!
Grandma calls them, Kiwanis Jokes!

Jessica Warner Leslie,
mother at peace with child.

B. February 25, 2011
Grandpa Leslie
Déjà vu all over again.

A 1979 Ann Arbor News series featuring active, church lay people, included a photograph of a newborn son, Drew Clifton Leslie, and his parents, Dale and Linda Leslie. Drew was eight weeks old; Thad was less than three weeks old. It’s interesting to note the similar facial expression of baby Drew and three decades later, his son, Thad. Drew, Dale and great-grandpa Richard Leslie were 31-year-old fathers.
Dixboro United Methodist Church

"In 1824, John Dix paid $1.24 an acre for three parcels of land totaling 469 acres," Tom Freeman, a life-long resident of the hamlet said. "He was forward-thinking because his plat included a village square where a school or a church could be built."

Dixboro is a quiet, friendly hamlet of two-three hundred residents approximately three miles east of Ann Arbor on Plymouth Road. It was bustling in its heyday as a principal thoroughfare to Detroit. It was a destination point for area residents featuring two saw mills, taverns, a well-stocked store offering haircuts, and a post office inside the store. Today, its oldest buildings are the Dixboro Store, the Dixboro United Methodist Church (1858) and the one-room schoolhouse (1888) located on the Village Green grounds, which is maintained and owned by the church.

During the last few months of his life, the late Russell Bidlack of Ann Arbor negotiated the purchase of a collection of the original letters of John Geddes, a Dixboro-area farmer, to his brother back east in the early 1800s.
In one of the letters, Geddes had some stinging comments about John Dix: December 6, 1831 "The logs will have to be hauled seven or eight miles and pass Dix's sawmill, which is 3 miles from us. Dix is a very unpopular man. There is no accommodation about him and after he Dix (appears) as a gentleman, he has their logs sawed and divided off. If the owner does not take it home right away, he must calculate to lose more or less, especially when there is a great demand for lumber as there was this past season."

One unconfirmed report noted that Mrs. Dix was "shining" deer behind their home. "Shining" deer" is focusing a bright light directly in the face of a deer which temporarily blinds them when the animal is targeted.

That move did not win friends and influence the people of Dixboro.

Rev. Loren William Campbell served as pastor of the Dixboro Church (1946-56). When Campbell arrived from Traverse City in 1946, the New England-style church showed character, but inside was a bare sanctuary without a chancel. There was no music program and few standing committees. In 1949, the church launched an ambitious construction project of a Church House addition with educational classrooms, a kitchen and a fellowship hall. Most of the labor was donated by parishioner and members of the community. A matching grant by local industrialist Harry B. Earhart enabled the Church House to be dedicated debt-free in 1951. Campbell later earned a U-M law school degree and served as Washtenaw County Probate Judge, 1978-1985. He passed away in 1996 at the age of 83.
"We Could See the Country Church Steeple From Our Kitchen Window."

It was appropriate that a Dixboro Methodist Church family - Lee G. BeGole & Helen Schmid BeGole - moved into the former church parsonage at 5045 Plymouth Road, next door to her parents, the Gotleib Schmid homestead. When washing dishes they could peer over the kitchen sink, out their window and see the glistening white church steeple. Helen was a petite, meticulous housekeeper and a long-time member of the church Altar Guild. She was devoted to accentuating the attractiveness of the sanctuary, especially for weddings, and would fearlessly stand atop a tall ladder and hand wipe the lattices of each chandelier.

Lee was of medium build, studious looking with a deep voice, and wavy silver hair. He established a Sunday morning ritual of unlocking the church, starting the coffee percolator, making sure the furnace had fired and the printed bulletins were folded. Lee was an extraordinary handyman and he earned extra retirement income by sharpening all types of blades in his shop off his garage.

Lee and Helen BeGole, pictured with their son Barney, were a caring couple who were in love with each other, their family and the Dixboro Church.
The Boy Scout Cabin on the northeast corner of the Dixboro Village Green has been on guard for 75 years.

Its service to the hamlet includes a youth group meeting place and a warm refuge during the winter months from an outside skating rink.

In 1933, a dismantled barn owned by the Detroit Edison Company, was the source of the materials to build the scout cabin. A mischievous volunteer roofer stapled his work mate’s shoes to the roof!

Eddie Martin uses his tractor to pull this treasure to his home.

In 2009, the cabin had fallen into disrepair and was no longer needed by the community or the church. Troop 30, the long-standing scout troop in the hamlet, had dissolved. Dixboro UMC parishioner Eddie Martin purchased the cabin. Lifted it off it's foundation and moved it intact just a few yards to the backyard of his home on Martin Drive.
"They threw away the mold at birth" shortly after Harry Botsford's splash-down. Mischievous Harry and his petite wife Alice and two children resided in a neighborhood just south of West Stadium Boulevard, southeast of downtown Ann Arbor. The Botsfords were the proprietors of Botsford Tile Company, a quaint business on West Stadium Boulevard, just south of Jackson Road.

Harry was a charter member of the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor Western and was quite active in their club's programs, including as a windshield washer (see photo) for the Prime the Pump fund-raising project at club member Sherman Reed's Texaco Station, at Main and Madison Avenue.

One cool fall evening Harry Botsford and three of his poker-playing cohorts traveled across the border to a Windsor casino. Soon the Ann Arbor group, except Harry, was focused on their winning poker run.
So, as the evening progressed, time affected no one, except Harry who anxiously waited to return home. "What's the hurry, Harry?" his pals said in unison.

"O.K. you guys, I'll just go home by myself," Harry barked.

Two hours later, when Harry's three buddies decided it was time to go home, no one could find Harry! His name was paged over the P.A., the evening's other poker-players were asked about his where-about and the Elmwood management showed a picture of Harry to each officer at an exit door and was asked if they had seen him. Nope, still no trace of Harry.

The Casino frantically called the Canadian Mounties who dispatched a special missing-person investigation team. Another two hours quickly elapsed, there was an unrelated positive development, Harry's friends were so focused on the mystery that they became sober.

The last alternative was implemented. A member of the party called Harry and Alice's house in Ann Arbor to see if he had phoned home. It had to be a carefully-worded question so as to not alarm Alice. A call was placed to the Botsford home and after three rings it was answered, not by Alice but by Harry with his polite greeting, "Good evening."

"Harry, none of us knew where you were or what happened to you!" yelled his frantic friends.

"Guys, I told you I wanted to go home. So, I took a Windsor taxi all the way back to Ann Arbor. It cost me $63.00 plus a tip, too." Harry exclaimed.
"Is there a doctor in the house?"

Jerry Lewis

The most memorable Harry Botsford stunt was on a couples night at the Elmwood Casino in Windsor and included the celebrated entertainer, comedian Jerry Lewis.

Just before the curtain time, a young man wearing a sculpted tuxedo, walked slowly on stage, faced the audience and asked somewhat brokenly, “Is there a doctor in the house? Mr. Lewis has taken ill.”

A hush covered the packed auditorium as everyone looked around the room hoping for a physician to make themselves known.

Suddenly, Harry jumped up from his seat, excused himself, and ran straight to the stage where he proudly introduced himself, “I’m Dr. Botsford, how can I help?”

Harry’s friends, who knew he was not a doctor, were shocked by his impulsive act and they were amazed to see him ushered backstage.
In an old, poorly lighted dressing room sat Jerry Lewis, formally dressed but slumped in a chair. Harry quickly felt Lewis' pulse and pressed his open hand against his forehead to see if he was feverish.

"I would say, Mr. Lewis' problem is he is overworked. He needs a rest," Harry announced.

Soon, a legitimate doctor entered the room and examined Jerry Lewis. A few minutes later, he gave his diagnosis.

"Dr. Botsford, I must tell you, I concur completely with your analysis!" the physician exclaimed.

So another Harry Botsford episode had come to its unpredictable conclusion and like the many others it was remembered by all who knew him.

The Botsfords were part of a number of couples that my parents spent time with socially in Ann Arbor. Most of the relationships began in the Ann Arbor JCCs and continued throughout their lives. And just like most groups in Ann Arbor, there was a lot of diversity.

But, there was only one Harry Botsford!
In a short drive around Ann Arbor you can see no fewer than 10 home sites where noted poets and authors resided.

With a stop at the Fairview Cemetery, the curious can find the inconspicuous grave of poet Robert Hayden who was raised in Detroit, later lived at 1201 Gardner Street in Ann Arbor and he taught at the University of Michigan in the 1970s.

Robert Hayden

Americans admire Hayden's widely anthologized poem about his father, "Those Winter Sundays," and his powerful poem about the slave trade, "Middle Passage." A Hopwood Award recipient, Hayden's most notable tenure was as a consultant in poetry to the U.S. Library of Congress, later changed to poet laureate. He was the first African-American to hold the post.

It has been said that well-known people in the arts and politics prefer to reside in Ann Arbor because the residents respect their privacy. Robert Hayden, however, was an outgoing, familiar bus passenger in town. He would ride the bus from campus (State and William Streets) to Packard Road and Gardner Street, just a few steps from his home.
Somewhere in the back of my mind, I knew that poet Robert Frost had lived in Ann Arbor, on two separate occasions. And later, acclaimed playwright and UM alumnus Arthur Miller rented an upstairs apartment at 411 N. State Street when he entered the University in 1934.

A great, world-class university, like the University of Michigan has a solid foundation of academic excellence built by distinguished students, faculty and administrators.

Today, where First Presbyterian Church sits stately in a peaceful wooded setting at 1432 Washtenaw Avenue, Issac Newton Demmon, a mathematics, and later, history professor at Michigan for 45 years, lived in what a peer called one of the town's "picturesque, pleasant and cultivated homes."

Frost, during one of his residencies in Ann Arbor, was the guest of Demmon and, tragically, in the same year, Demmon passed away. A summary of professor Demmon's illustrious career in the Michigan Alumnus magazine ran nine pages. His colleagues noted that his death "crowned a life of incessant labor, and enriched by such a depth of experience as few men, and only big men, can know."
I was surprised to learn about the former residence of author Betty Smith at 1314 Broadway, whose published works include "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn."

In the 1940s, Harriet Simpson Arnow, the author of the widely read novel "The Doll Maker," moved with her husband, a former journalist with the defunct Detroit Times newspaper, to a comfortable home in Ann Arbor Township.

Other Ann Arbor notable resident-writers include poet in residence Jane Kenyon, 2896 Newport Road; and Joseph Brodsky, a Russian-American poet, essayist, and Nobel Laureate in Literature, who lived at 309 Wesley Street.

Dale Leslie is proud that his hometown is a comfortable place for notables to visit and reside. While their creativity earns them fame, the public attention becomes a mixed bag at their door-step. For them, Ann Arbor’s Unique Quality of Life and the privacy it provides are a welcome respite.
When I first heard the distinctive, controlled and pleasing tones of the voice of the late Fred Hindley, I thought, "His voice sounds like the announcer I would envision representing WUOM and the University of Michigan."

During the 1960s, each week, WUOM shipped a half-dozen pre-recorded U-M programs on reel tapes in maize 'n blue boxes to subscribing radio stations in the State. The subject matter featured a wide gamut of relevant topics.

The stations appreciated receiving the 30 to 60-minute shows which bulked up their programming, especially on the weekends. One weekly program was entitled "Commentary" and another dealt each week with health issues. Hazen Schumacher, a renowned jazz enthusiast at the University and WUOM, hosted a show on that genre.

The tape program introductions were all the work of Fred Hindley in his familiar style: "This is Fred Hindley in Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan Broadcasting Service is proud to present Jazz Revisited with Hazen Schumacher."

Fred Hindley, 74, was found deceased in his South Lyon, MI home on Friday, August 14, 2009, by some friends who had not seen or heard from him on Friday.

After admiring the sound of Fred's pronouncements on the radio for several years, I had the opportunity to meet him while covering a series of coed murders in the late 60s in the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor area.
"Yes, I saw a house airborne in Ann Arbor in 1935!"

When long-time resident, Jeff Hunter greets the morning sun, she can see her late husband's boyhood home. The stately, five-bedroom Tudor over looks the picturesque Huron River Valley in northeast Ann Arbor.

Early Saturday morning in the fall of 1935, Harry B. Earhart, local philanthropist, offered the mance to his nephew Laurin Hunter, with the caveat that the house was to be rotated, moved across a gully and come to its final resting spot where it sits today.

Mr. Earhart was planning the construction of a new mance when the move of their former home was completed.

"Dad knew of a company that was moving a church on Adams Street in Detroit because of the widening of Woodward Avenue," John Hunter once recalled, "He arranged for an official to visit the property on Sunday."

The house on Laurin Heights, south of Geddes Road, ca. 2008
The house movers closely inspected the Earhart homestead, measured its girth and walked the distance to its intended re-location. After the final pacing, the company official came forward with his estimate for moving the house: $10,000. Agreed on by all parties.

How was the move accomplished? The workmen sledged holes in the basement walls and crisscrossed steel beams underneath the joists. They carefully built cribbing in the home's basement to support the large screw-jacks that literally lifted the house off its foundation.

With bridle and line, anchored to a stationary, braked truck, the movers painstakingly tugged and rotated the house 90 degrees and began the tedious quarter-mile journey on steel rollers across the gully.

Curious observers were startled to see that at one point, to remain level, the home resting on the bridge-work of timbers, was elevated to 18-feet in the air! It appeared to some that the house was airborne!

Once in its resting place, the only noticeable after-effect of the three-month undertaking was a crack in the dining-room wall which was later hidden with an artist's touch-up brush.

Dale Leslie longs for a copy of the photograph taken by Eck Stanger, the Ann Arbor News photoman, of the Earhart mansion, when it was raised 18-feet in the air to remain level during its trip to its new location.
How Ann Arbor's West Stadium Boulevard Became a Major Business Corridor.

Looking North, West Stadium Boulevard at Liberty Street, ca. 1952.

During the past 50 years, the dramatic commercial growth in Ann Arbor has occurred along the one mile-stretch of West Stadium Boulevard between Pauline Boulevard and Jackson Road.
In the recent past, that east-west portion of the boulevard stretching north and south was referred to as "Ann Arbor's Financial Row" as one major bank established a home office and half a dozen other banks located branch offices in the corridor.

In 1947, Ralph and Bernice Moore gambled on their future by building the first A&W Root Beer stand in Ann Arbor on the west side of the then Stadium, a two-lane paved road. Ralph received encouragement from a relative owner in Saginaw who felt that Ann Arbor was ripe for A&W Root Beer. The Moores' forward-thinking soon resulted in their stand becoming a popular icon and drive-through for teenagers cruising West Stadium.

The real estate headliner in 1958 was the development of Ann Arbor's first retail shopping center: the West Stadium Shopping Center.

Realtor-business owner, the late Beulah Fuller O'Kane, was selling lots on vacant land along the east side of West Stadium, north of Pauline Boulevard, owned in part by her son-in-law.
Ypsilanti barber Will Leonard, an early lot purchaser, was tipped to the lots' attractiveness by a fellow barber, Sam Cole of Ypsilanti, who between haircuts dabbled in real estate.

"Will, there's a McDonald's hamburger drive-in being built on the east side of West Stadium, just north of the commercial lots," Sam exclaimed, "You know the drive-in will attract a lot of people to West Stadium Boulevard!"

A 1944 graduate of Ypsilanti High School, Will Leonard dreamed of owning and operating his own barber shop.

Through a generous loan from Ann Arbor Federal Savings (Great Lakes Bank), Will purchased a lot for a final price of $5,000. He hired Keith Heiss as the building contractor to construct his shop.

"There was also a rumor that the U.S. post office was going to locate on West Stadium," Will recalled. "There's no question, the increased flow of traffic helped build our customer base," the friendly barber noted.
Within a year, Leonard Barbers opened its doors with three barbers, at $100 a week, and the owner, Will. "Sam thought I was crazy guaranteeing the pay for my barbers. But, soon the customers came flocking to our shop." Indeed, by the mid-1960s at Leonard Barbers, five barbers were so busy that numbered tags were handed out to determine the order of service. Also, Will leased part of his rear building to a beauty salon.

Other businesses that quickly located on West Stadium were Hutzel Plumbing and Heating, P & H Mobil Service Station, Ace Hardware, Michigan Chandelier, Wrigley's and National supermarkets, Fowler's Pancake House and Tice's Tavern. Only Ace from that group has survived the many stages of West Stadium development. Hutzel Air Conditioning, Heating and Plumbing is now located on South Industrial Highway.

On Maple Road, which ran parallel to West Stadium, Robertson's Screen and Door had been perking since the early 1950s. Bruce Robertson (owner) and his son, Duncan were popular business owner-proprietors. Plus, new to the shopping center was the highly respected family business, Steeb Brothers Market and the Little Boot Shoe store. Soon, Stadium Pharmacy and Greene's Cleaners opened.
Ann Arbor Grieved the Edwards Family Members Who Perished.

His pose is just as I remembered him. He was handsome, with a fair complexion, hair well-groomed, and in his usual doctor-facial posture which was offset by his welcoming, compassionate eyes. Dr. Aaron Robinson Edwards' photograph appears stately in a gallery of past physicians, many of whom are deceased, in the hallway of the former education center at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, on Huron River Drive, across from Washtenaw Community College.

These dedicated men and women, sworn to uphold the Hippocratic Oath, reciprocated their patient's loyalty by providing up-to-date, dependable medical care, often from a medical-practice located in their home.

During the 1950s, I just loved Dr. Edwards as my doctor, one of just a handful of Ann Arbor family physicians. The City was half of today's population and there was a limited choice of pediatricians. Countless parents, many of whom are now grandparents, fondly remember Dr. Edwards as their children's caregiver. My parents were no exception. When I was sick, they called Dr. Edwards.
A stethoscope was a fixture around his neck. "You have broad shoulders," he once remarked while examining me, "You'll be a good football fullback." This was high praise for a seven year-old. My mother said we could ask Uncle Bud just exactly what a fullback does.

It was an era before free-standing medical buildings. Dr. Edwards' practice was in his two-story, family home at 912 Church Street, in a close-knit family neighborhood.

On Sunday evening, November 9, 1958, a raging fire, apparently kindled by the sparks from an unscreened fireplace engulfed the Edwards' home. The family bedrooms were on the second floor. Mrs. Edwards and two of their three sons David and Bruce- ages 9 and 7- escaped the inferno by scrambling to the flat part of the house roof.

The trio were shaking uncontrollably as they nervously climbed down a ladder to safety and into the waiting arms of their neighbors and friends who had gathered to help.

Dr. Edwards in a familiar situation.
"The radio newsman must be mistaken. This could not happen," we thought.

Meanwhile, Dr. Edwards somehow had escaped the fast-spreading fire, stumbling out the front door, witnesses said, and into the cold night air. To his horror, he realized that his daughters Karon (12) and Lucinda (6) remained inside the smoke-filled house. He quickly dashed into the home to rescue them. All three succumbed to the thick gray smoke.

I will never forget the shock as we awakened to the radio news report the following morning. It was a story so horrible, overwhelming and shocking, that it could not be true! "The radio newsman must be mistaken. This could not happen," we thought.

The Ann Arbor community was rocked with grief. In many towns, including Ann Arbor, the tragedy was a front-page story and rapidly spread from resident-to-resident, and neighborhood-to-neighborhood. To this day I wish I will awaken from this real-life nightmare.
Many tributes were shared about Dr. Edwards from his colleagues and friends. He was respectfully remembered as a devoted husband, father and physician.

Today there remains a comfortable, warm feeling when I look at his photograph in the hospital hallway. I never became the fullback that he predicted. But he always made me feel good and what more could you ask from your dedicated doctor?

The Edwards home on Church Street today, facing east. Mrs. Edwards and two children escaped the house inferno by stepping out on the south end flat roof while neighbor John Devall hoisted his tall wood ladder to assure they safely reached the ground.
Frank Davidson, of Ann Arbor, a hunter of no mean ability bagged one of the largest bucks of his hunting experience, in the deer season of 1924. He brought the deer home to Ann Arbor and proudly showed the envious home folk, then placed it in sub-zero refrigeration for curing. He was also an excellent cook, especially of wild game, and the thought occurred to him to give a venison dinner for some of his Kiwanis of Ann Arbor club members and friends. After a little time, the idea became a plan and he sent out invitations to the officers and board members of the club and to those serving as chairpersons of a club committee.

The dinner was complimentary and held at Frank's Whitmore Lake cottage. 35 attended. Frank not only furnished the cottage and tables, dishes and chairs, venison and foods and coffee and dessert, but he did the cooking and preparing, himself. It was a banquet royal, and the variety of foods served, the abundance of it and its tastiness is still remembered by all those who say, "I was there!"

After dinner was served and the tables cleared, the crowd gathered around a roaring stove fire and swapped yarns for a time and then turned to the discussion of Kiwanis club-related issues. Each one present was asked to criticize or suggest, just as he liked, and did just that.
Two hours later, when a checkup was made of all that had been said and done, it was agreed that this had been one of the most helpful meetings in the history of the Ann Arbor Kiwanis club. (Editor’s note: the club was founded in 1921, four years earlier. It was held in such favor that Kiwanian Frank was asked to repeat it annually, except that thereafter those who attended should pay for the meal.)

These venison dinners were held at Frank’s cottage for seven consecutive years. The crowd grew larger, year by year, and in 1931, 72 attended. Such a crowd made it necessary to haul chairs, tables and dishes from the YMCA and it caused so much extra work that the dinners were discontinued.

At these venison dinners, held always in the early part of December, as the old year was closing and a new year was about to begin, members expressed their opinions openly and freely, on the year that had passed and just as freely, made suggestions for the future.

It was at these meetings that objectives were discussed, and projects planned. One year, Harry Nichols suggested a rummage sale as a money-raising project. It was thereafter adopted (1927), and time has proven the suggestion to have been wise. The venison dinners were discontinued, but the memory of them lasts in Kiwanis annals.

F. Roy Holmes (Member #166) of the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor felt a commitment to keep a record of the club history. From the chartering of the club in 1921 until his death in 1949, he and his committee compiled detailed records of club members, honors earned by the club and the multiple services the club provided the community. The above is an account of a Kiwanis Club customary event gleaned from his records.
The Tractor on Its Heels Looked Like the "Leaning Tower of Pisa!"

It was like a pleasant dream as a teenager to spend many memorable, summer days on the Patrick farm in rural Gregory, Michigan. This City slicker soon learned that chores and challenges are never-ending on a busy farm.

Uncle Dan and Aunt Eleanor and family resided in a durable 1800s farm house, set proudly on 190 acres along Bradley Road. Living upstairs at the homestead, my cousin, Dean, served as the ring-leader of our summer mischief.

Behind the farmhouse, it's the early morning commute, rural-style. The big, red barn doors swing open to greet a daily rush of dairy cows - with names like Betsy or Ruthie - who, with a little prodding, move awkwardly into the milking stalls. The barn cats have arrived for work and will soon begin to cry for spilled milk. When the cold outside air reaches inside the warm barn, it mixes with a cow's heavy panting and it engulfs the milking room in a humid moist mist.

Margaret, Dean's oldest sister, and her husband, Charley Purdy, lived a quarter-mile north of the farm and were always welcome visitors. Like most farm families, Charley had blended into the Patrick family and pitched right in. Dean grabbed Charley to enter the barn where war was declared. Both combatants armed themselves with potent B-B guns. The stacked bales of hay in the loft served as cover as they climbed to the highest reaches of the barn. And when one of them sneaked behind the other, there was hell to pay with a hail of B-Bs tearing at your back and riddling your britches. Fortunately, only a person's pride suffered in the battle.

I can just see Margaret in her small kitchen as she pours thick cake batter into several tins and bakes the cakes at 350 degrees for 45 minutes, and then, later, a beautiful wedding cake is frosted, created by her loving, creative hands.
It was a thrill for me to pilot the Patrick's big Farmall tractors around the farm. The bright red monsters with huge black rear tires and much smaller tires in the front, appeared to be huge tricycles. When they faced a heavy pull, black smoke and sparks would shoot upward from the stack as the tractor's powerful engines were put in gear. And as I discovered later, a tractor's power can snap back at you.

Uncle Dan startled me one morning by asking, "Could you handle driving the tractor and raking some recently cut alfalfa?" I confidently said I could do it (trying to convince my uncle and myself!) Well, while on the tractor on enumerable encirclements of the field, I nearly fainted and fended off dizziness. However, this was my chance to realize a dream: to solo with a Farmall tractor, pulling a revolving, well-oiled piece of farm equipment, while smelling the new mowed hay and the satisfaction of completing a chore.

How could life be any better? The fly in the ointment? While briskly motoring the big Farmall back to its place in the barn, I hit a deep patch of mud and the tractor tires began to spin uncontrollably. The gigantic machine hit the barn head-on and while the back wheels spun in the mud the front wheels began to climb the side of the building.

While all this was happening, Dean was yelling at me to turn the key off to halt the tractor's engine. I couldn't hear him! I flipped back off the seat and hit the ground scampering to safety. The tractor was shaking uncontrollably and Dean bravely reached in and turned off the ignition key. Wow! Here was my much admired Farmall tractor with its front wheels in a fixed position, high on the side of the barn. Dean reached in and shifted the tractor into neutral. Rapidly the front wheels came down, leaving tire marks on the side of the barn that I assume are still there today.

I told my dad the story when he picked me up at the end of the week to return to Ann Arbor. I suggested, "Let's not tell mom, OK?" My father nodded his head in agreement.
Workers put a section of the new Michigan Stadium scoreboard in place so we can envision the boards’ size.

All we had to go by previously were the six supporting white poles for each board. These poles were comparable in size to the River Rouge industrial smokestacks and intimated that they were going to support a scoreboard that would have a display approximately equal in the square footage to an aircraft carrier flight deck.

Has anyone thought of the unintended consequences of scoreboards this size? Thanks to no impediments of reality or even logic, I can present, on first impression, what those consequences might be.
MID-MICHIGAN: (Birch Run exit on US-23 North, 60 miles north of the Michigan Stadium, man pumping gas into his car at a service station and staring intently southward.) Maw: "Paw, what's takin' so long for you to pump that gas?" Paw: "It's OK Maw, Michigan just scored and Ohio State has a minute, 10 seconds before the half. I want to see what happens. Just like watchin' on TV."

(Standish, 120 miles north of the Michigan Stadium, man sitting on his roof with tray holding chips, dip and several cans of beer.) Paw: "Hey, Maw, Michigan just scored!" Maw: "That's nice, Paw, but I was just wondering, how are you going to get down off that roof after you drink all that beer?" Paw: "Carefully, Maw, carefully." (Subsequent news item in the Saginaw News:) Junius "Paw" Smichengrabber of 314 Sawdust Street, suffered a broken leg as a consequence of watching the Michigan-Ohio State football game Saturday when he fell off his roof.

UPPER PENINSULA: (High atop the Porcupine Mountains) Several voices: "Michigan just scored, eh? Are we still in the State of Michigan, eh? No, I think Wisconsin annexed us, eh? What time do the Packers play tomorrow, eh? Some scoreboard, eh?"

COMMERCIAL AIRLINER NEAR THE ARCTIC CIRCLE, EN ROUTE FROM EUROPE: Pilot: "This is Delta Tango Cha-cha-cha 409. Mayday, mayday. All our navigational instruments and radar are out. Do you copy, Detroit Metro?" Air traffic controller: "Roger, Delta Tango Cha-cha-cha 409. Will guide you in."

Pilot: "Hold on, Metro. I can see the Michigan scoreboards. Will home in on that!"
"It's not over until it's over!"

No one can remember Ann Arbor as a one-horse town but many locals can recall matriculating the single public high school.

And on crisp, cool Friday fall evenings during the early 1960s, fans of all-ages would file from the corners of town to Hollway Field to watch their local schoolboy heroes play football. Hollway Field, named after the legendary coach-athletic director Lou H. Hollway, was a electrically-lighted, high school stadium that sat on a high elevation creating a brilliant aura that served notice that the Pioneers were home to play another Six-A-League foe.

In 1961, a memorable homecoming game with a storybook finish saw its pages unfold versus Lansing Eastern High School.

In action for the visiting Quakers was a husky, senior line-man, Dennis Hill, who later emerged as Ann Arbor's most prolific high school men's and women's swimming and diving coach. The Lansing quarterback was Paul Stine, who graduated from the Air Force Academy and later emerged as a two-star General in the U.S. Air Force.
The score of this exciting, close-fought contest was Lansing Eastern - 14, Ann Arbor High School - 12 with less than a minute to play. Many home fans, accepting the defeat, solemnly walked to their parked cars and today, 50 plus years later, may not know the outcome!

On the last play in the game, Eastern quarterback Stine rolled out from under center to kill the clock. Wham! The Pioneer co-captain, end Kelly Rea raced in untouched with a jarring tackle on the Quaker signal-caller that caused a fumble.

Pioneer Senior Steve Naumcheff calmly scooped up the pigskin and galloped untouched 35 yards for the winning score!

Footnote: Around the jubilant Ann Arbor locker-room a rumor: “The heroic Naumcheff would replace the Homecoming Queen at the ball.”

Where is Steve Naumchef today?

Home: Hesperia, MI
Retired: Livonia Public Schools, H.S. teacher, then counselor.
Family: Wife, Jan, sons Brett, Grand Rapids; Trent, Mancelona; both CMU 1990 MAC Football Champions; four grandkids.
Early in March, over 40 years ago, March 6, 1970, former Ann Arbor resident Diana Oughton, 28, and two young men, all members of the radical, locally-based "The Weatherman" underground, were killed in a violent explosion in an alleged bomb factory/townhouse in New York's Greenwich Village.

I was a 22-year-old, aspiring local radio news reporter, who was excited that a reliable source had given me the exclusive story of the explosion. One problem with me reporting it: since our radio station broadcast only during the daylight hours, we were off the air until 6 a.m. the following day.

It was painful. I literally sat on my first major news exclusive!

Since an impatient young newsman becomes extremely anxious, in haste, I decided to telephone a news report to the popular radio station CKLW-Radio 80, Windsor-Detroit, whose format catered to a college-age audience.

The CKLW newsman was somewhat reluctant to accept an unconfirmed story of violent deaths from an unfamiliar person from a small, day-time radio station in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

But when the next "20/20" newscast blasted over the CKLW air waves, they inserted my audio news summary of the events in New York City and the story was first broadcast loud and clear to their listening audience throughout Michigan and North America. I was thrilled to hear my voice-report of this exclusive story.
Dale's Debut

Today, I remove the rose-colored glasses and look back at my news story from the perspective of an older adult and a parent.

In 1970, my timely report of this major story was an opportunity to further my career. And I suspect today's young reporters may too become obscure to the personal effect of a tragic event. It is more than reporting unfamiliar names and numbers and the importance of beating a newspaper or a broadcast deadline.

I have a 32-year-old son who is happily married and teaching at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. I pray that he and his wife and my grandson Thad will have much happiness and a long and fruitful life. Diane Oughton was 28 when she died. At her grave site, March 24, 1970, the presiding minister explained Diana's death as part of the violent history of the times. So sad.

Quickest Way to Alter a Station's Signal Strength

Radio tower falls in collision

MUNISING — No injuries were reported Monday after a radio station transmitter tower was knocked down in Newberry.

Michigan State Police troopers from the Newberry post said a man accidentally backed a pickup truck into the tower at the studios of WNBY radio in Newberry.

Larry Parker, 55, of downstate Chelsea was driving the 1998 Ford F150 pick-up truck that was pulling a snowmobile trailer. Troopers said Parker had apparently been trying to turn around in the parking lot when he struck the tower with his vehicle.

The tower collapsed onto the radio station building. The building sustained minor damage, according to police. Crews from Cloverland Electric Company worked to make the area safe. Cloverland employees estimated the tower was 230 feet tall.

Police said the radio station had resumed broadcasting today. The accident was reported at 1:38 p.m.

Parker, an Ann Arbor hair stylist, made his closest cut, eh?
"It was a Great Radio Run with Great Memories!"

Dale R. (for radio) reflects 1966-1975

Dale R. Leslie
AFRTS Alaska

Bob Ufer
UM Play-by-play

Mel Strughold & Nancy
WDMJ-FM Marquette

Fred Hindley
WUOM

Arthur R. Vuolo, Jr.
Radio’s Best Friend

John C. Fountain
Voice of EMU

Jimmie Blake
Lighted the fire

It was always “Mr. Wallace” – to me, never “Wally” as others called him. He was a broadcaster’s broadcaster. He taught me to write crisp, inviting-to-the-ear commercial copy. For a noon newscast, he read a stream of unedited copy from The Mining Journal newspaper located on the floor below and concluded, “And, within time limitations, that’s the news” or “with that, my time is up, thank you for yours!”

Eldon J. Wallace (Wally)
WDMJ Marquette 1967
WSWS Ypsilanti 1966
WDS Ypsilanti 1969
WDMJ AM/FM
Marquette 1966-68
WOIA Ann Arbor 1968
American Forces Radio & Television Service
(AFRTS) Ft. Greely, AK
(U.S. Army) 1972-73
KFAR Fairbanks, AK 1973
WATH AM/FM Athens, OH 1973-74
Sideline Observer- today

Left to right, Radio Legends Cactus Dave Carr, Bill Rich with Dale R. at WCLX-Boyne City, founded by Rich, who passed away in August, 2011 from intestinal cancer in Fort Wayne. David Carmine was a close colleague at 989.539.7105

Paul Donovan & Dale R. (photo on left) both worked at WDMJ in Marquette in the late 1960s. Later, Paul received recognition as a central dispatcher of the Michigan State Police for calmly walking a couple over the telephone through the Heimlich maneuver to save the life of a choking victim.
Dan Mullaly (Country Dan Dixon) earned valuable experience on a childhood imaginary station (like most of us) in his home basement bedroom on Bruce Street. He never wandered far from a microphone. Dan was the program director at WCXI - Detroit (see above) with the unpredictable Deano Day to manage. And later, he saw his popularity rise to the top as the nightly host on XM Satellite Radio and his personable country music show broadcast from coast-to-coast.

Jim Heddle, pictured below, whose father chummed with Ted Heusel in the 1930s on the polite Dewey Street Gang, has worked at WPAG and WAAM, where at the latter he produced solo a six-hour, 50th anniversary show in 1998. He is now (2011) heard on KMXZ and KQTH in Tucson, AZ, where he resides with his wife, Vickie.
Lou Velker, right, owned WCM 990-AM in Ypsilanti which evolved to a few-in-number, full-time religious radio station. Lou, semi-retired, is a volunteer for many non-profits and his church and is an active Republican who was elected and served with distinction on the Ann Arbor City Council.

Lucy Ann Lance (Visovatti), below, is arguably the best known and most diverse media person in Ann Arbor and her outreach stretches beyond her loyal radio audience. Lucy is pictured at a U-M football tailgate with former U-M hockey coach, AL Renfrew, and the talented Detroit sportscaster, Doug Karsch, who is also from Ann Arbor.

Greg Siefker, a former Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti broadcaster, obtained the license, built, and owned WMLM-Alma-St. Louis, MI. Scott Westerman, Jr. now "broadcasts" the virtues of Michigan State to all levels as the head of the MSU Alumni Association. Radio veterans Dean Erskine and Tom White distinguished themselves in advertising sales. And a special expression of appreciation goes to the late Ronald Dawson, my radio-TV instructor at Ann Arbor Pioneer High School, who evaluated my broadcasting ability, dedication to the field and loyalty to the school, and assigned me to the student public address announcer team as a junior which was a position usually reserved for seniors. I helped deliver the P.A. announcements daily to the student body and faculty. It was a valuable experience.
These Voices Spoke Volumes to Me.

Lee Russell, PD, KFAR-Fairbanks (1973), hired me sight un-seen due to my age, experience, degree, and the U.S. Army covered my salary!

Van Patrick, the renowned, respected broadcaster-owner, was the M.C. of the 1971 U-M Football Bust at Cobo Hall. He asked me if I wished for him to switch my cassette machine microphone off during the lull between speakers at the podium.


J.P. McCarthy, Just Don’t Tell ‘Em Where I Am

March 22, 1936 - August 16, 1995

J.P.’s St. Paddy’s Day party’s on-the air over WJR, was legendary. JP McCarthy (center), former Michigan AG Frank Kelly (left) and Jack “Black Jack” Kelly, former Detroit City Council & Irish Ambassador (right).

Bill Black, WJR News (1929 – 1992)
Radio station call letters beginning in 1922 as issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) began with the letter K to stations west of the Mississippi River.

So it was surprising that in 1980 the call letters KTGG were awarded to Spring Arbor College (near Jackson, MI) for their new AM radio station.

Legend says someone at the FCC in Washington mis-read "MI" (the postal abbreviation for Michigan on the station's application and thought they saw the abbreviation for Missouri or Minnesota.)

KTGG thus became the first new station east of the Mississippi River with a "K" call letter in decades. Radio stations such as KYW in Philadelphia (originally in Chicago) and Pittsburgh's KDKA had retained their heritage calls that were awarded before 1922.

Thanks for the memories
Broadcasting and Broadcasters!

A footnote: KTGG wasn't the last broadcaster with this distinction: a new station in Napeague, New York was originally dubbed KCBF in 2008 by the FCC, before changing to WEGB in 2009.
Party pooper!
Dale Leslie was born and raised in rural Dixboro then Ann Arbor. His only other location was to attend graduate school (1973-74) and serve in the U.S. Army in Alaska (1972-73). He earned a Bachelor's and two Master's degrees, including an M.A. from the University of Michigan.

Dale and his former wife Linda Leslie, have two sons, Dr. Drew C. Leslie (1979) Professor of Trombone Performance at Appalachian State University. He earned his M.A. at the Manhattan School of Music in New York and his doctorate (DMA) in music from the University of Texas-Austin. His wife Jessica Warner earned an M.A. in oboe performance at Texas following an undergraduate degree in the same discipline at the University of Michigan. Their newborn is Thad Warner Leslie.

Graham T. Leslie (1981) a U.S. Navy enlisted sailor presently stationed at the U.S. Naval Base, Norfolk, VA. He performed in the highly-regarded drum line of the Michigan State University Spartan Marching Band, 2000-2005, playing the bass drum. Graham is an alumnus of MSU and his brother Drew graduated from their arch rival The University of Michigan.

Dale and his parents during construction of Leslie Office Supply, Inc. 1969
photo by Robert Peter Lee

Dick and Grace Leslie behind the counter at Leslie Office Supply, Inc. The store was founded in 1961 by the Leslies and sold in 1997.
c. 1970
Three Leslie generations of service to our country:
Richard D. Leslie, U.S. Army 1942-1945
Dale R. Leslie, U.S. Army 1972-73
Graham T. Leslie, U.S. Navy, 2008-active

Dale R. (for radio), as he is often referred to from his radio broadcasting days is a 30 plus-year member and past president of the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor.

1970 U-M Media Day – A much slimmer coach Bo and an interviewer (me!). Bo had wrapped up his initial season (1969) by suffering a serious heart attack at the 1970 Rose Bowl. Bo’s daily regimen included several early morning laps around Ferry Field.

Little Known Fact Department
"I once replaced the legendary Ted Heusel"

I was hired by Felty Broadcasting, the new owners of WOIA -1290 Ann Arbor, in 1968, to host the afternoon show. My first day on the job, Russ Jolly, the GM, called a staff meeting at the station. In attendance were local WOIA radio legends Ted Heusel (see photo) and Lucy Gregory and I think, Steve Filipiak. Jolly quickly got to the point and said Heusel, Gregory and Filipiak "no longer worked at WOIA." A radio novice at the time, I was shocked by these sudden moves by management. So, I replaced Heusel on the P.M. shift. And I remained on the air simultaneously at WSDS.
Dale is a retired business owner and actively volunteers in the community at the Kiwanis club, the Washtenaw County Historical Society, the Ann Arbor City Club and the Ann Arbor First Presbyterian Church. An avid writer as an avocation, primarily about local history, nearly forty of his works appear on annarbor.com. Several local historical photographs are a portion of his collection posted at the Ann Arbor Area District Library site. Dale can be contacted at 734.660.1023 or daleleslie@comcast.net or measuring the pulse of the city with the Morning Crew at Washtenaw Dairy. He possesses audio and video recordings of past Ann Arbor notables. And Washtenaw County Prosecutor Brian Mackie's scissors from first grade that he's never returned!

Dale's Local History Compiled on the Net
www.annarbor.com  Search “Dale Leslie”
www.AADL.org/gallery/pic  Search “Dale Leslie”

*Photos pages 3,8,32,&33 by Timothy J. Kellman Photography
Leslie family photo, page 46, by Robert Peter Lee
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