

A mess, by any name

By Kevin Wilson



Much wailing and gnashing of teeth around these parts in the past few weeks in response to the amount of news coverage drawn by events at Northville Regional Psychiatric Hospital. The news stories generally use "Northville" as shorthand for the hospital, offending residents who find the usage in such an unfavorable context a slur on their fair community.

At least one person was moved to write a letter to the mayor, township supervisor and the Wayne County commissioner seeking to have the hospital's name changed, forwarding a copy to The Northville Record. County commissioner Mary Dumas promptly got the issue placed on the agenda for consideration this week. That is but a beginning to the answer — the hospital is a state institution and the best the county could do is request that the state consider a name change. Better to address letters to your state senator, representative and, most of all, the department of mental health and the governor's office.

Which is not to say I find this a terribly productive idea. What residents are really objecting to is not the name of the hospital, but the way the big daily newspapers use it. You've got to admit, Northville Regional Psychiatric Hospital is a mighty hefty handle. News space being at a premium, reporters naturally shorten it to Northville. When we need a shorthand reference for our papers, we use NRPH, which has the added advantage of being a little bit shorter for

headline writing purposes.

Realistically, though, we can only do that because our readers are familiar with it. Put NRPH on the front of one of the Detroit papers, send it out to Grand Rapids and readers wouldn't know what the story was about. Even familiarity can't solve everything, though. Not too many years ago, the official name was Northville State Hospital. NSH is too easily confused with NHS (Northville High School), so that didn't work too well, and Northville State sounds like a college.

An intensive letter-writing campaign can generate some limited results, though, particularly if you make sure you include the newspaper editors and TV news directors. Remember Jackson Prison? The citizens of Jackson got tired of seeing their town's name splashed around in 72-point type announcing riots and started making noise about it. They got the name changed to Southern Michigan State Prison at Jackson. News reporters generally use the full name on first reference and often use SMSP in the rest of the story. But look at recent headlines and you'll see it didn't solve that problem — copy editors still have to write headlines that convey a lot of information in a small space and the more familiar name does that.

Before you shortchange your local officials, keep in mind that they already prevented the state from naming any of its three local prisons after Northville or

Plymouth. We have the Phoenix, Scott and Western Wayne correctional facilities. The latter is the new title for the Detroit House of Correction, which obviously was a long way from Detroit.

Since the prisons are new state institutions, the reporters and headline writers presumably will use those names. The Jackson example shows, however, that long usage is not easily changed. I still see frequent references to Northville State Hospital, all the words capitalized as if that were still its official name. The hospital has been here more than 25 years — changing the official name might not change much.

Which brings up my own, probably unpopular, opinion. It was before my time, but it seems unlikely that anyone objected to the hospital's name when it was built. At the time, it was state of the art — one of the best in the nation, I've heard tell. That may say as much about our changed expectations over the years as it does about the recent deterioration at the hospital, but the fact is the state was mighty happy to lay claim to the facility. Northville may well have been proud to have its name attached to it. Now that it's fallen on hard times, some folks want to disown it.

It strikes me as somewhat selfish, even if well-intended. If we're going to hold state officials' feet to the fire, I'd much rather be urging improvements in the mental health system than quibbling over one word in the hospital's name.



Record photo by STEVE FECHT

Driver Dolores Boyd helps Michael off the bus at home

Bus drivers earn this parent's respect

To the Editor:

My heartfelt thanks I wish to extend to the transportation department of Northville Public Schools.

I am the mother of a little boy enrolled in the special education program at Old Village School. In the years that my son has been transported back and forth from home to school I have had the privilege of getting to know his bus drivers personally.

The bus drivers have been the most loving and caring of people to my son. Mrs. Boyd is the current driver for my son, and the personal involvement she

has shown has been unmatched.

How many bus drivers would tell you just what your child had to eat at school today, and, maybe I should put long pants on him because it's a little "nippy?"

Mrs. Boyd along with her aide Martha are just as excited as we are about the little things that my son does that are extremely hard for him to accomplish.

Just to have bus drivers that are just as concerned about the well being of our children as we parents are is truly a great feeling for the parents of Northville. Thank You!

Michael's Mom

Readers Speak

Let's change state hospital name

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter is a copy of one sent to Northville Township with copies also to the City of Northville and the Wayne County Board of Commissioners.

Having been a Northville and Northville Township resident for the past 17 years, I would like to urge a movement to remove the word "Northville" from the Regional Psychiatric Hospital.

Unfortunately, any public or press mention of the facility usually is negative and reflects adversely on a beautiful and gentle community. In my view there is no need for Northville's name to be attached to this facility.

I have the utmost compassion for the patients and sympathy for the employees of the hospital, but their connection with Northville is almost nonexistent. Most are not Northville residents and contribute nothing to the community. However, whenever a scandal or unfortunate incident happens at the hospital, the headlines scream "Northville" this or that. Why not simply call the hospital the Regional Psychiatric Facility?

Over the years Northville and Plymouth have become a dumping ground for criminals (DeHoCo, etc.) and other unfortunates. I realize facilities for these people are needed, but why go out of our way to attach a specific community name to these places? Community identification is not necessary or desirable. Your help in changing this situation is appreciated.

Don Sherman

Northville was proud of Dr. Mary Lapham

To the Editor:

This is a very late reply to the last question (regarding the New School Church, the former Northville Public Library) asked in The Northville Record (Olde Northville quiz) of March

27, but I have been busy with other matters.

I do not know whether Dr. Mary Elizabeth Lapham was related to the owners of the handsome Lapham's Men's Store on the south side of Main Street — perhaps all people with the same name are related — but I am concerned only with question 50 because this has to do with my family, and I am the only person who could answer it.

Mary Elizabeth Lapham, who was involved in many projects here before she went to Germany to study their methods for treating tuberculosis, first maintained the handsome private bank on the north side of Main Street. It was a beautiful little building with Oriental rugs on all the floors. And after banking hours, she and Dr. Burgess did dissecting to study anatomy!

She went on to Germany to learn more — six or seven trips — and while there decided she ought to bring back to Northville someone who could teach German here. It was a fortunate step. Most of the young people living here joined the classes and learned to speak German after a fashion.

For some reason there was a great German migration to Northville at that time, and these people were delighted to have my father, head of the bank on the corner of Main and Center streets, able to speak to them in their own language. They would kiss his hand, and appreciated his help in finding homes here.

After Dr. Mary returned to Northville, she established the Mary E. Lapham Library, donating the first collection of books, serving as first president of the organization, and encouraging citizens with money to spare to make very generous gifts.

Mrs. W.G. Lapham persuaded her friends to add to the collection of especially fine books on the balcony. Everyone in Northville helped in some way.

As result of her research in Germany,

Dr. Mary E. Lapham established a sanatorium at Highlands, North Carolina, the highest elevation in the East. I have only one picture of her at that time. She brought the bookkeeper from the Northville bank and had an official hostess, Mrs. Dougal. But Dr. Mary was absolutely without fear, and would go to any place in the surrounding valleys at night if called.

My husband and I, going through that area on one of our trips east, went to Dr. Mary's former home and found it as I remembered it. It now belonged to Mrs. Dougal's niece, Valerie, who came every summer to spend some time where the weather was cool.

Not long after those days the sanatorium burned — a total loss because it was insured in German companies. Dr. Mary moved to Florida and was there until the time of her death. She was buried on Mrs. Dougal's private lot in a cemetery north of Detroit.

Dr. Mary, a very great lady who did much for many people!

Elizabeth L. Chapman

Teachers say thanks for parent luncheon

To the Editor:

I would appreciate it if you could publish this letter for me. To the Parents' Advisory Committee:

On behalf of the Northville High School teaching staff, I would like to sincerely thank you for the buffet luncheon you served us last Wednesday. The variety of salads and desserts which so many of you carefully prepared was a delicious treat.

We appreciate the time and effort that made this Teacher Appreciation Luncheon a success.

Sincerely,
Pat Conzelman
High school teacher

Seniors honored at annual convocation

Continued from 5

Vocal Music Award, Melanie Bennett, Kevin Murray, departmental award, David Dore.

- Science — Departmental Award, Eric Wheatley; Bausch and Lomb, Eric Leidencker.
- Social Studies — Behavioral Science, Claire Langran; history, Maureen Okasinski; political participation, Alan Griffith.

Honor students who have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 are:

Gregory Abraham, Deanna Akroush, Steven Allen, John Marc Anderson, Lisa Anderson, Mary Arley, David Baird, Robert Baird, Gillian Barr,

Pablo Barreiro, Andrew Barron, Julia Bemer, Melanie Bennett, Dawn Biondi, William Bohan, Mark Borin, Marianne Braasch, Karen Brining, Ann Brisbey, Christine Burke, Theodore Bytnar, Patrick Calhoun, Theresa Campbell, Claudia Canto Hernandez, Sylvia Caroselli, Laura Chamberlain, Neil Chowdhury, Denise Colovas, Michele Craig.

Others are: Adam Danes, Christie Davis, David Denhof, Brooke Domeracki, Elizabeth Donovan, David Dore, Kristen Dudley, Lisa Dudley, Matthew Eaker, Sharon Faydenko, Catherine Foster, James Frisbie, Nancy Gensley, Brian Goehmann, Laura Goscinski, Scott Greiner, Alan Griffith, Brian Groves, Robert Guldberg, Also, Jane Hodgson, Sandra

Horstkotte, Lori Housman, David Hoyer, Katryn Jacobi, Robert Justus, Joanne Kalsner, Chris Kaley, Tim Kemp, Tom Kemp, Ronald Kepner, Frederick King, Tracy Kohl, Kathy Korovin, Becki Lafave, Lasley Lane, Claire Langran, John Lazar, Karen Lenaghan, Daniel Levan, Kathryn Lickman, Brett Llewellyn.

Others, Carolyn MacDermid, Todd Mai, Tracy Martin, Manjushree Matadial, Douglas May, James McCulloch, Jared McIntosh, Marc McNamara, Kimberly McRae, Kendall Mercier, Angela Munsell, Kevin Murray, Brett Netke, Brant Nicholas, Jennifer Nixon.

Edgar O'Brien, Maureen Okasinski, Cynthia Panowicz, Jill Parkinson, Jeffrey Peters, Chris Pineau, Nancy

Poirier, Holly Pope, Katrina Powell, Julie Ritter, Vicki Robins, Jane Rodda, Sharon Rosenthal, Maren Rosmorduc, Thomas Ross Joanne Russell, Shari Russell, Erin Ryan.

Ferde Sanders, Frank Schugar, Jeffrey Skolarus, Cheryl Spaman, Eric Stern, Stacy Sweitzer, Jill Taschner, Suzanne Terwin, Tammy Thomas, Linda Townsend, Jennifer Trausch, Christopher Tuckfield, Gordana Tudjman.

Also, Peter Vancaeneghem, Susan Vanderbok, Joel Vogt, Gaynelle Wagner, Mandy Walts, Karen Weaver, Cheryl Wellman, Gregory Wendel, Michael Weyburne, Eric Wheatley, Pamela Wilkinson, Kenneth Willey, Sheryl Woerner, Cheryl Yant and Lisa Yarmuth.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is the intent of Botsford General Hospital, a licensed acute case general hospital, to open the

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to provide out-patient services for persons and their families experiencing problems with alcohol and drug abuse, at 26905 Grand River Avenue, Redford, Michigan 48240. For information or comment, please contact:

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