



Sauk Village's Original Community Newspaper

THE SAUK VILLAGER

A Community News Service for the 21st Century

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TUESDAY NIGHT MASSACRE TOWERS UNDER INVESTIGATION

By Joseph Wiszowaty
SAUK VILLAGE | The Village Board of Trustees voted 5 to 1 to place the Village Treasurer Genorise Carmichael on "paid administrative leave" pending an investigation of "misappropriation of funds". Trustee Enoch Benson was the lone no vote.

The actions didn't stop there, the Village Board voted once again 5 to 1 with Benson voting no to place the new Village Manager Henrietta Turner on "paid administrative leave" pending an investigation of "misappropriation of funds". Turner was given an order by the mayor to issue a payroll check to Police Chief Robert Fox.

Fox was appointed "temporary

Police Chief" on November 22nd. At that time the Village Board of Trustees warned Mayor Lewis Towers that there was no money budgeted for the position of police chief and they awaited a proposal from Towers to pay for the appointment. Towers has not discussed any proposals on paying for a police chief since or during the recent budget hearings.

Turner ordered that a payroll check be issued in defiance of the Village Board's direction that Fox was not to be paid since he knew there was no money to pay him when he accepted the "temporary appointment".

Benson claimed that the administrative leaves were racially motivated since Carmichael

and Turner are "black" but went on to say that the Village Board didn't want to place the white employee Sandy Dieterich on leave since she was the one who actually printed the check. "Mrs. Dieterich is a civil service employee and disregard for following a direct order of a superior is grounds for termination for insubordination" Trustee Derrick Burgess said later.

The debate got really nasty as Benson called Burgess an "uncle Tom" which is a racially derogatory term which means a black being in subservience to whites. Burgess chastised Benson for his racial innuendos claiming that Benson was doing no better than what was done to him and his forefathers back in the 1950s and 60's and that there was no place for his

racial hatred today and that it was inappropriate.

During Burgess rebuke Benson kept making comments and gestures which prompted Burgess to pause and say "Mr. Mayor you need to control 'little mayor'".

The Village Board also is calling for a formal investigation by the Cook County States Attorney into the actions involving the Mayor Lewis Towers for "misappropriation of funds, official misconduct and possible theft" according to the motion made by Trustee Rosie Williams.

Towers said in a more humbled voice and tone "it was my at-

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2012-55 Years Later

By Joseph Wiszowaty
SAUK VILLAGE | With over 500 vacant homes, an economic recession and Mayor Lewis Towers not working with the majority of the Village Board, what is ahead for Sauk Village in 2012?

Sauk Village will celebrate this year the 172nd year from its settlement as New Strassburg and 55 years of incorporation as the Village of Sauk Village on March 12, 1957.

Also in March, the voters of Sauk Village will decide if they

want to double down on their water bills to get Lake Michigan water or if they do not, then the Village Board will likely proceed with the least costly air stripping alternative to clean up the village's water.

Before the Village can move forward a criminal investigation must get underway by the Cook

County States Attorney into Mayor Lewis Towers for allegations by the Village Board of Trustees for "misappropriation of funds, official misconduct and possible theft". The Village Manager Henrietta Turner

and Village Treasurer are also ran against Towers in 2009, under investigation and to David Hanks and Enoch Benson.

will once again be without a police chief on January 23rd unless a court stops the Village Board's action to limit the Mayor's temporary appointment of Robert Fox as a temporary appointment.

We're likely to see the kickoff of the Mayoral election with Lewis Towers expected to seek re-election to a second term in 2013. Other rumored to be considering a run for Mayor are Trustees Derrick Burgess, who

The housing crisis is probably the biggest issue the Village is facing in 2012 outside of the political fragmentation. Solutions will be sought through the Village's Housing Commission in the year to come.

The Economic Development Committee will be presenting plans for design standards and guidelines in the first quarter of

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tempt to make sure the chief gets paid. Why should we continue to go to court use your money to go to court. It was my attempt to stop this madness of the Village Board. It seems as though to me that any time I try to bring anyone from outside, the board has a way to stop it" Tower said.

The Village Attorney Michael McGrath of Odelson and Sterk was instructed to provide a summary of charges to be presented to the Cook County States Attorney Anita Alvarez's office for "misappropriation of funds, official misconduct and possible theft" according to McGrath.

The Village Board ordered Turner to turn over all electronic keys, pass-codes and village issued property immediately and to issue orders to all department heads of the fact that the manager has been placed on leave and that Richard Dieterich will be serving as interim Village Manager.

Turner and Carmichael's leave was "indefinite" pending the investigation. No details as to who would conduct the investi-

gation or when the investigation would get under way were immediately released by the board.

Turner immediately left the Village Hall escorted by the temporary Chief of Police Robert Fox. Consequently Turner was not available for comment.

Carmichael was not at the meeting and was not available for comment.

Trustee Williams further requested that an investigation be conducted into charges of "official misconduct" by the temporary Police Chief Robert Fox. Fox allegedly made "threats" according to Williams but she did not elaborate on the charges.

Fox disrupting the Village Board meeting during William's statement saying he had met with the US Attorney's office, however, didn't elaborate but Towers did not gavel Fox out of order.



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TOM NICHOLS

First for Sauk Village

By Joseph Wiszowaty

Thomas J. Nichols, never referred to as "mayor" was the first Village President elected in Sauk Village was born on April 16, 1926 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Nichols spent his early childhood in southwest Wisconsin after which he moved to Chicago and graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1944. Nichols served in World War II in the 11th Airborne Division. Nichols also attended the University of Wisconsin and study Civil Engineering.

Nichols was employed at a corrugated carton manufacturing company in Chicago and

moved to then New Strassburg in 1956 in the "Garden Section" at 1734 223rd Street. Nichols was married to Pat and they had two children Jan and Timothy.

Nichols was elected on April 16, 1957, coincidentally his 31st birthday, as the first Village President and was sworn in on April 18, 1957. Sauk Village then had a population of 478 people and 104 homes. The weight of getting the tiny community of Sauk Village off the ground and running was on this young man's shoulders. In January, 1958, the Village had acquired the Indiana Hills Water Works owned by the Talan-

dis Brothers, the original wells are still in use to this day. On April 25, 1959 a special census was conducted and the Village had grown to 3,073 residents. The enormous pressures of growth and lack of professional planning began to show and in 1959, there was talk of dissolving Sauk Village altogether. Nichols and the Village fathers of the day would have none of that talk and set out to build a community.

By 1960, Sauk Village's population had grown by 1,614 more residents in just one year to 4,687 or 4500% in just 3 short years which has never been



Thomas J. Nichols
1st Village President

matched, the pace of growth in those early years were difficult for the young community and the school district. Balancing a family, a full-time job and a Village had to take its toll on Nichols but politics was definitely in young Nichols blood.

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NICHOLS)*

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Nichols was fortunate enough to have become the Republican nominee for the Illinois Senate. Unfortunately, Nichols lost the election in November, 1960 when John Kennedy was elected President of the United States. Sauk Village's history may have been quite different had Nichols Senate election been different. After his defeat in November, 1960 Nichols once again focused his attentions to Sauk Village and his up coming re-elected.

In April, 1961 Nichols was re-elected as Village President and during a special census the Village's population reached 5,774 residents and 1,258 homes. In 1962 Village Trustee Ted Theodore was appointed as Village Supervisor/Village Manager and served in that post until 1986. Theodore was husband to Village Clerk Agnes Theodore. Toward the end of Nichols term in office new residential construction began to slow as many steelworkers, who made up the initial wave of residents lost their jobs and many lost their homes.

Nichols completed his term in office with the election of Roger Theisen, whom Nichols had appointed in 1964 to fill an unexpired term of Trustee Frank Wagner. Nichols was just 39 years old when he completed his second term as Village President but Nichols set the course for what would come for the next 47 years and his legacy lives on today.

Nichols served with 4 Village Clerks. Leona Black (1957), who went on to serve as village Treasurer the only Village Clerk to have gone on to another office either appointed or elected; Noreen Peterson (1957-1959); Barbara Stock (1959-1960) and Agnes Theodore (1960-1985) who remains the longest serving elected official in Village history.

Nichols served with 5 village treasurers, 6 police chiefs, 6 fire chiefs, 19 Village Trustees.

Nichols Avenue is named in honor of Sauk Village's first village president, just as Theisen Avenue honors Roger F. Theisen, the Edward W. Paesel Community Center honors former Mayor Ed Paesel, Mark Collins Drive honors

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2012 and will be presenting a more comprehensive Community Development Plan this year.

Another big issue facing Sauk Village is the unacceptable crime rate and the need for police officers. Voters in 2003 voted for a property tax increase of \$0.20 per \$100 equalized assessed value to pay for additional police officers. The referendum as approved in 2003, gave the Village an additional \$120,000. That with the additional 5% utility tax increase on the electric bills gave the village an extra \$190,000 or a total of \$310,000. In 2002, prior to the referendum, the Village had 19 sworn positions within the Police Department.

Today the Village has 22 sworn positions a far cry from the 28 anticipated following the referendum. Crime and residential burglaries have increased substantially and no plan has been presented to date by Mayor

Towers to increase the ranks or ways to fight crime or how it all could be paid to do it.

The Village did hire 9 additional police officers after the referendum, but through attrition the numbers have been decimated. The job of fighting crime with statistical data showing a sharp increase in crime has been left to just about the same number of police officers.

The Village will also be facing serious cuts in expenses in the General Fund, which impacts the Village Administration and Police Departments. Once the

legal bills begin to come in from the lawsuit filed by Mayor Lewis Towers additional officers and employees jobs are at risk which could impact services to the residents.

The Village Board balanced the budget in 2011 with a \$15 surplus and no new revenue bring more money.

Infrastructure of the Village continues to age along with the fleet of Police Cars which are old and battered most purchased prior to 2008 and exceed their life expectancy and again, no plan presented by the Mayor on how to get new squad cars to replace the aging and crumbling fleet.

There are many complex problems that the village will face in

2012 and Lewis Towers has not presented the Village Board of Trustees with any plan, direction or focus but has continued on a confrontational and non-productive path.

One serious pressing issue is that the village must pay back some \$500,000 in what is described as an "overpayment" that was made to the Village which is likely going to put the village in a "cash crunch" for a brief time. The amount said to be due on January 9th.

The Sauk Villager

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Editorial

Joseph Wiszowaty

Words cannot describe what one actually witnessed at Tuesday night's meeting. It was truly, once again, historic.

Never in the history of the Village of Sauk Village has a village board of Trustees brought a formal charge, an accusation, against the Mayor or village president for 'misappropriation of funds, official misconduct and possibly theft'.

I didn't think I was in Sauk Village when I was at the meeting. I kept asking myself what is going on here? This is not real, but infact it was very real and now it is affecting people's lives. Many longtime residents who were in attendance thought the same thing and yes there were many who were there to witness what I called the massacre.

I felt truly sorry for Henrietta Turner, for she apparently has been sucked in to a political vacuum of Lewis Towers tangled web of Chicago-style politics. She sat silent during the village meeting as the people who took a political risk in hiring this woman voted in less than 60 days to place her on administrative leave.

What was more ironic, or dare I say, hypocritical, the trustee of nothing, that being Enoch Benson, actually voted against placing her on administrative leave. Why is that hypocritical? He didn't vote to hire Ms Turner, he didn't vote for the ordinance for the Village Manager but he's going to VOTE on a matter he refused to vote on! That's a hypocrite! Or as Trustee Derrick Burgess called him "little mayor".

I felt really bad for Ms Turner sitting there all alone at the table, that was until temporary Chief of Police Robert Fox decided to go up and sit next to her I guess to console her during the Village Board meeting. I'm not sure Mr. Fox has been to many village board meetings as he clearly doesn't understand what decorum is. I hope he finds a seat somewhere and sits in the thing for the meeting.

Ms Turner made a "career decision" by taking it upon herself in defiance of the Village Board to order that a check not be issued for the position of police chief.

I'm not sure what Mr. Towers was thinking when he "ordered" Ms Turner to cut Fox a check? The Village Board has the power, the "village president" being only the first

among equals. He's not above the Village Board and not beneath.

An interesting observation was made during the meeting while the Board was in executive session. "You think that Lewis would have gotten the clue when his guys (Francine Anderson, Lynda Washington and that other guy) lost by a 3 to 1 margin. He didn't he got worse..."

Towers did get worse, politically speaking and never once has he capitulated and chosen to compromise with the Village Board of Trustees who clearly has the majority now that he once had when he took office. So how did Lewis Towers loose his working majority in the first place one must ask— wait that's another editorial to come.

Residents began calling for Towers to resign at the meeting Tuesday night. The massacres which occurred may likely cost the Village a Treasurer, a Village Manager, a temporary police chief and maybe even a Mayor. Only time will tell, but now it's time for the Cook County State's Attorney's office to move swiftly to protect the public interest. A delay by their office would be a dereliction of duty.

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1967 Parade on Sauk Trail

Photos courtesy of Mark Loferski



Notice the old Sinclair Gas Station at the corner of Sauk Trail and Torrence Avenue. Currently the US Bank



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The old "Dog-n-Suds" home of the "Hometown Gyros" today



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