



## "If It Fitz. . ."

### Tribute to Claude Bell

By Jim Fitzgerald

Claude W. Bell of Highland Park was one of the statistics printed regularly in newspaper articles about despair in big cities. He was a young black man with no job. Last month, his lifeless body was found floating in the Detroit River.

There was a tiny story about the death on a back page of this newspaper. It hinted that Claude Bell's life ended in suicide. It didn't say why he might have killed himself. It didn't say anything about what he had done with his 29 years of life.

This isn't unusual. There was nothing spectacular about Claude Bell's death. He wasn't shot while robbing a bank, or knifed while defending his home. And there was nothing front-page about his life. He didn't hit home runs for \$1 million a year, or spend \$11 million per delegate to run for the presidential nomination.

To someone who didn't know him well, Claude Bell's life would appear fairly

typical of the thousands of street people who "never get a break." There was no great public notice taken of his death, and it seemed sufficient that the mourning was limited to friends and relatives. But a Methodist minister doesn't think that was at all sufficient.

He is the Rev. W. Herbert Glenn, pastor of the Clawson United Methodist church. Soon after speaking at Claude Bell's funeral, Mr. Glenn told me: "Our church is a strong supporter of the work done by Rose Bell and her son Claude. He was tormented by an epileptic-type disease which did not at all respond to normal control medications. As a result, he had tremendous headaches and the seizures prevented his ever getting and holding a job."

"So he spent his time on the streets trying to help young black men to get to school, to stay in school, to get jobs and to get along without falling into the normal traps of the street. . . I think Claude Bell's life deserved more than a four-inch column on a back page."

Claude's mother, Rose Bell, lives in the Jeffries Housing Project and runs United Neighbors. Her group of volunteers finds food and clothing and other help for people who can't get it anywhere else. And, quite

uniquely, the people receiving help are required to "pay" for it by helping United Neighbors help others.

Mrs. Bell told me Claude was in "constant, terrible pain most of his life, but never wanted her or anyone else to mention it. Medication didn't help because, for many years, he was incorrectly diagnosed as an epileptic. Only recently was it discovered he had a brain tumor, Mrs. Bell said. Because of his illness, he was never able to support his wife and three small children the way he wanted to, and this worried him greatly."

"In spite of all that, he felt he had to help the young people, and they listened to him because they knew he genuinely cared," Mrs. Bell said. "He found them jobs and took them to the hospital and even took them into his home. He did what the big social agencies couldn't do. He worked miracles."

Pastor Glenn recalled the summer Claude organized a summer program for about 30 youngsters. "He got them food, and tents to sleep in. He was like a first lieutenant. He taught them to say grace before meals and he taught them table manners. He was always taking youngsters to wherever they had to be to get help or jobs or schooling. He tried to show them how to live in the society they have to live in."

Why did he do it? Claude's older brother, Paul, answered: "Because he was in love with the world and all people."

Did the pain of his illness force Claude to jump off the Belle Isle bridge? Or was he escaping from a life of chronic unemployment? He wasn't paid for his work with children and "the system looks down on volunteers," his mother said.

Claude Bell's family and friends find it difficult to believe he killed himself. They are searching for another explanation of his death. But they have no doubts about his life. They know it was worth a lot more than a four-inch column on a back page. They are right. It was worth more than an \$11 million delegate.

# Top students named at Kingston H.S.

Kingston High School Principal Lee C. Robinson has announced the 1980 valedictorian, salutatorian and top 10 honor students.

The 1980 valedictorian is Elisabeth Ann Britton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Britton of Plain Road, Kingston.

Her accumulative grade point average is 3.976, out of a possible 4.0.

She has received a letter of commendation for outstanding performance, placing in the top 5 percent on the PSAT-NMSQT test, administered nationwide to college-bound high school juniors in October, 1978. As a result of her ACT scores, she was named a State of Michigan Scholarship semifinalist.

Elisabeth is a three-year letter winner in track and cross-country. She has also played French horn in band for four years and has been in the National Honor Society for four years, where she has served as president the last two years. She has been a class officer the last three years and a member of 4-H.

At the Dayton Center church, she is involved in the Word of Life Club, the senior high quiz team, sings in the choir, plays piano, and teaches primary church.

Elisabeth has been accepted at Word of Life Bible Institute, Schroon Lake, N.Y.

After graduating from the one-year program, she is planning to transfer to Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio, where she will major in medical technology.

The 1980 salutatorian, Shelly Stoll, is the daughter of Dallas and Faye Stoll of Silverwood. Her four-year grade point average is 3.82.

Shelly's school activities include being homecoming representative in the 10th grade and class treasurer in the 10th grade. She has been a member of the National Honor Society for four years, serving as treasurer for the past two. She has lettered in track three years and cross-country two years.



Elisabeth Ann Britton

She has been very active in 4-H for nine years, receiving numerous awards including a citizenship short-course trip to Washington, D.C. and district winner in fashion revue.

Shelly has also been an active member of her church youth group and has been a member of the church choir.

Her interests include traveling, animals, reading, and sewing. She plans to attend the University of Iowa next year and major in physical therapy.

The remaining top ten students are:



Shelly Stoll

Lisa (Teets) Lyons, daughter of Evan and Beverly Teets.

Marie Lalko, daughter of Michael and Jane Lalko.

Sally Engler, daughter of Kurt and Ella Engler.

April Finlayson, daughter of Sharon and James Finlayson.

Laura Cherniawski, daughter of Laura Cherniawski.

Tina Neu, daughter of Robert and Pat Neu.

Pam McLemore, daughter of Alfreeda and James McLemore.

Gary Peter, son of Richard and Jan Peter.

## Cass City H.S. bands receive '2' rating

The Cass City High School symphony and concert bands each received a 2 rating in the district band festival Saturday at Fenton.

Each band was rated by four judges. A 1 rating was the best possible and 5 the worst.

Each band had to play a march of its own selection, a required number and a number of its own selection.

The symphony band was the only one that competed last year, when it received a 3 rating.

Band Director Thomas Clair said the symphony band's rating does indicate it showed improvement over last year, but with "things to

strive for yet" in order to improve further.

Bands from about 15 high schools took part.

Symphony band members performed in the morning so were able to get back in time to go to the basketball game. Concert band members played in the afternoon, however, so weren't able to go to the game.

## The Haire Net



Our city cousins have many misconceptions about how all of us hicks in the sticks operate.

That's apparent all through the year but never more apparent than when they try to explain interest in the high school sports teams in smaller communities.

All of those misconceptions are aired most frequently during a time like now when the community is caught up in support of its team during "March Madness" tournament time.

One of the favorite explanations is that in hickville, there's nothing else to do. When it comes to entertainment the line is it's the sports team or nothing.

It's evidently inconceivable to persons living in Detroit that Thumb dwellers have all the options that they do . . . and a few they don't, such as walking down the street at night without an armed escort.

Detroit with its cultural advantages is at our doorstep and most of us use them. The bars serve the same brands here as they do in bigville.

It's hard to figure out whether metro media don't know why high school teams are big in small towns or whether it just makes good copy to say, "Main Street in Podunk was deserted as the tiny hamlet closed up to follow its team, etc.," and then go on to tell how it was the biggest thing to happen there in 50 years.

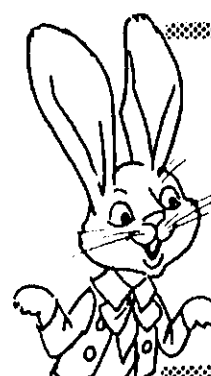
Intimating, of course, that in this hamlet it was big because it lifted the ancients from their front porch rockers.

The only thing accurate about that picture is that the interest is there, is genuine.

That's true for at least two good reasons. One is that virtually everyone knows something about the team.

They know one of the players. Or work with the parents of one of the players. Or the grandparents talk about their grandson at the weekly bingo party. Somehow virtually everyone is touched by the activities of the teams.

The second reason is a little harder to pinpoint but



## Rabbit Tracks

By John Haire

(And anyone else he can get to help)

Don't worry. If Cass City won its quarterfinal match at Troy Athens you won't miss the annual Cass City Chamber of Commerce banquet.

If Ecorse falls, the banquet is postponed to April 12, says President Tom Herron.

\*\*\*\*\*

Win or lose the Hawks travelled in style when they went to Troy Wednesday. That's because the Cass City Lions rented them a Greyhound bus to make the trip. Set the club back \$350, according to one member.

\*\*\*\*\*

Perfect putdown. Bill Wallace related this at the coffee table Tuesday. After that wild win in the regional finals Saturday, a Hamady booster informed Janice Winter that Cass City wouldn't go far.

She quietly replied, that's one more than Hamady will win.

\*\*\*\*\*

What promised to be a bonanza for Kathy Iseler almost turned out to be the most expensive free food she ever received.

It all started when Mrs. Iseler won the right to forage for free food for 3 minutes in a Cass City IGA contest.

After the 3 minutes she had her cart piled high with goodies, more than any other winner in the previous weeks the contest ran.

Everything was fine until she arrived at the check-out counter to unload her loot. It was then she discovered that the diamond from her ring was missing.

She scurried back over the route she had taken and found it on the floor.

Whew!

\*\*\*\*\*

Incidentally, IGA owner Harry Lenda evidently wants his prize winners to do well. After the shopping spree was over he asked Mrs. Iseler if she missed anything.

Informed that time ran out before she got to the hot dogs, Lenda picked up a couple of packages and gave them to her.

## Complaints decline

The Tuscola County Sheriff's Department recorded 447 criminal complaints in February, a sharp drop from the 544 received in

January.

The greatest number, 148, involved traffic (accidents, reckless driving, etc.), followed by larcenies, 49; vandalism, 32, and domestic problems, 30.

Deputies made 48 arrests during the month, including 29 for traffic violations and four for larceny.

There were 364 traffic tickets issued, including 179 for speeding, 55 for defective equipment, 38 for stop sign violations and 25 for no proof of insurance.

Patrol units traveled 43,563 miles and consumed 3,708.6 gallons of gasoline (11.7 miles per gallon).

The county jail took in 138 inmates during the month, of whom 11 were female, and released 139.

Cass City police made six arrests in February, three for traffic, two for burglary and one for assault.

Caro state police made 14 arrests, including eight for traffic and two for sex offenses.

The number of complaints received from and accidents in area townships and villages in February respectively were: Cass City, 47 and 0; Elkland township, 18 and 0; Ellington township, 12 and 4; Elmwood township, 14 and 5; Kingston village, 6 and 1; and Novesta township, 18 and 4.

There's no doubt that the small town syndrome is alive and thriving in the Thumb and here's one vote for keeping it that way.

It's the theory here that persons in small towns are more interested in what's going on with their neighbors. That's one reason why they live in small towns.

There's little doubt that your life is more private in Detroit than in Cass City where "everybody knows everybody."

That's good or bad, depending on your viewpoint. I feel that it's great that I can be thrilled right along with the rest of the town when "our boys" make it to the quarterfinals or win a championship.

If I didn't, my place would be in Detroit, not Cass City.

There's no doubt that the small town syndrome is alive and thriving in the Thumb and here's one vote for keeping it that way.

1. We can custom build to your specifications.

2. We have packaged building available designed and priced to save you money.

3. Material only or erected by certified Farm Bureau builders.

We offer complete building services. Call or write



**ANTON PETERS**  
5822 Cass City Road, Cass City,  
Mich. 48726 517-872-4405 or

**GLEN ERSKINE**  
753-3457 Saginaw



JUST PLAIN, UNCOMPLICATED

# FREE CHECKING ACCOUNT

IT'S SIMPLE. JUST COME IN AND OPEN YOUR ACCOUNT AND THEN WRITE ALL THE CHECKS YOU WANT

Cass City Office

## Thumb National Bank and Trust Company

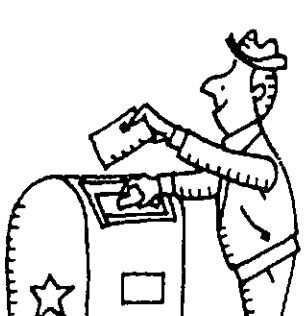
FREE CHECKING - NO MINIMUM, NO SERVICE CHARGE  
HOURS: Mon.-Thurs. 9-4 - Fri. 9-8 - Sat. 9-12

6128 E. Cass City Road

FDIC

Phone 872-4311

Bank by mail.  
We pay postage



No need to keep deposits in another account

No Service Charges hidden away to surprise you