

## FRED BATCHER PASSES FIFTY YEAR MARK AS VILLAGE CLERK

I was first appointed Village Clerk on April 17, 1952. That meeting was held in Mr. Robards' living room. Since then, I have been re-appointed to this position each and every year. I can recall missing one meeting, in particular, when I prepared all of the paperwork, labeled each with a note stating what to do and where it goes next. I was confident that they could follow my very detailed instructions. However, they did not. Very few meetings were postponed due to inclement weather. A few meetings lasted only 20 minutes.

When first appointed, I became the third Village Clerk in the then ten and a half year history of the village. The village was incorporated on Monday, November 3, 1941 and resulted from the citizens of the area petitioning the then St. Louis County Court. The first Village Clerk was the late Fred G. Borgschulte, who was a building contractor who built several homes in the village. In 1951, Jerome Blaine became Village Clerk. He served one year and was elected to the Board of trustees in the April 1952 election.

The late William O. Robards, a village resident and village businessman, asked if I would be interested in the opening. You know what I said. In 1952, we were paying \$180.86 per month for street lighting. We then had about 45 lamps in service. It was only comparatively recently that the number was increased due to additional installations primarily along Graceland Avenue at the alley lines. After a short time for some reason, the cost of street lighting dropped to \$178.38 per month. Today, we are paying four times that amount or \$683.18. In 1952, the so called "big three" automobiles cost about \$2,100.00.

In the election of 1957, the village had an entirely new board of five trustees. Each resided on a different street. I believe this to be an ideal situation. The late Jerome Brown became the Chairman. He held that post until 1969 when his family relocated outside of the Village. Another trustee who had long years of service was the late George Ray Cassel who served for a total of seventeen years. William C. Egsieker, our third Marshal, served forty-one years from 1953 to 1994.

Including the July, 2002, meeting, I have prepared 9,629 treasurer's warrants and provided the attestation on 337 ordinances. I have prepared more than 600 sets of minutes for regular monthly meetings, special meetings and hearings.

In the past, the tax rate was fifty cents and as high as sixty-five cents. For many of the recent years it has been \$.35 per one hundred dollars of assessed valuation. We once had four operating gasoline service stations; one of these sold 30,000 gallons of gasoline per month. We then collected the \$.01 per gallon motor fuel tax directly from the distributors. When we no longer collected this revenue on our own, we were guaranteed future receipts would not fall below the last of our direct collections or \$365.65 monthly. It is far easier for me to relate to the history rather than to my own experiences as clerk.

Dorothy L. Miller, served the City of Overland as City Clerk from 1953 through 1988. The late Edward L. Wyland served on the Ritenour School Board from 1931 through 1972 which was then a state record.

I believe that I have enjoyed being clerk and serving our neighbors throughout the village. If anyone asked me a question, I did not walk away from it. Instead, I accepted the challenge by finding out for that resident and for myself. I recall writing what I thought was a large treasurer's warrant for the repair of Walton Road, a whopping two thousand eight hundred seventy-six dollars!!! To date, I can say the largest is \$132,602.19. Some contrast.

In 1962, the Board of Trustees paid Jackson Tree Service \$2,066. to trim all of the trees in the village.

I believe the only commodity the governing body has to offer the residents is service.

How services have changed over the decades! I recall when we came to Hartland, we had trash collections three times a week at the rear of the house. Then, no resident would tolerate trash cans at the curb. In those days we had coal furnaces and ashes and clinkers. The curbing on Brown Road and Hartland, the first in the village to be installed, cost all of forty cents per lineal foot with W.P.A. labor in the summer of 1938.

The 18 Chairpersons with whom I served are as follows:

Carl H. Lane	1952-1953	H. Harold Ross	1953-1954
Leonard J. Steber	1954-1955	Chester A. Love	1955-1956
Ben W. Coughlen	1956-1957	Jerome Brown	1957-1969
Donald W. Cates	1969-1974	Warren Heidbreder	1974-1979
Robert S. Olson	1979-1983	Gerald L. Fetsch	1983-1985
Cynthia Peters	1985-1988	David P. Schulz	1988-1989
John T. Petroff	1989-1990	Dale L. Schulz	1990-1997
Stephen J. Fleming (1 month)	1997	Richard W. Patton	1997-1998
Marti Arnold	1998-2002	Phillip Burke	2002-

I held a full time job outside of the village until I retired in May 1997.

*Fred Batcher*  
Fred Batcher,  
Village Clerk  
Village of Sycamore Hills  
August 8, 2002