

## YESTERDAY'S BRIDES 1983

#8

When **Joseph Culek** (coo lick) was appointed Police Marshall, in the mid-1920's, the need for police was a new and startling idea for the Wooddale area residents

For many years police dispatching was done from downtown Chicago. Residents could call a number and the Chicago Police would call the Marshall. Later the calls were circuited through the DuPage County Sheriff's Department.

**Adolph Sofka** served as Deputy Marshall in 1943, Marshall in 1951, and in 1952 his title was changed to **Chief of Police**.

The communication system left much to be desired. His wife, **Helen Sofka**, had the responsibility of answering the phone and taking messages that had to wait until someone picked them up. Not a very satisfactory system! Soon a set of Walkie-Talkies was purchased so that she could relay the messages to the car. Oh yes...the Chief provided the car and gas. As Wood dale grew a Police Association was formed. The members raised their own funds for Squad Cars and Uniforms.

In 1959 **Al Nerkins** was a part-time Chief with one full-time patrolman, Frank Salandra, and a 13 man part-time force.

At this time Wooddale established it's own radio base system and the men, at their own expense, equipped their own cars with radios. Private cars were still used for Police Duty. There were two radio dispatchers; **Pearl Busse**, who doubled as crossing guard at the main intersection and **Al Preisinger** (pry sing ger) as dispatcher. The Police Station was in the Train Depot, a building without water.

Chief Nerkins made arrangement with **George Welters**, who spearheaded the Library Building Program, to construct Police quarters in the Library building...then located at SW corner of Edgebrook and Irving Park Rd. The Policemen donated their Association funds, about \$1,500 and untold man-hours to actual construction side-by-side with other community volunteers.

The men then finished the interior of their section by themselves. They had an office and 2 cells. Within a year the cells were converted to office space and prisoners were taken to the County Jail in Wheaton.

**#8 cont.**

When the Municipal Building was built in 1970 the lower level became Police Headquarters complete with two holding cells.

Wood Dale's population is now 11,200 and the Department has 19 sworn Police personnel, 7 marked squad cars and 4 unmarked for use by the Chief and Detectives.

Today the Wood Dale Police Department boasts a superior communications system with direct contact with the National Crime Information Center in Washington DC and the Law Enforcement Data System. These giant computers are connected with 36 other States. Wood Dale is part of the Illinois State Police Emergency Radio network which enables all participating communities to have direct contact with all participating communities and to have direct contact with other communities squads. To guarantee air space Wood Dale shares one frequency with Bensenville. Each Patrolman carries a portable radio on his person which provides an updated communication system with a faster computer system for leads and with crime analyze capability.

We've come a long way from the walkie-talkies shared by Adolph and Helen Sofka.