

OUR CENTURY

1960

AT A GLANCE



PLAIN DEALER FILE

The Indians sent slugger Rocky Colavito, left, to the Detroit Tigers in exchange for Harvey Kuenn.

'Trader' Lane galls Indians fans

The calls started pouring in to The Plain Dealer as soon as the news was announced: "Frank Lane just threw away the pennant!" "I'll never go to the ball park again!" "We're going to start a new fan club — the Lane Haters!" "Frank Lane just cost himself 250,000 nickels!"

It was April 17, the day before the Indians' season opener, and General Manager Lane had just traded Rocky Colavito to the Detroit Tigers for outfielder Harvey Kuenn. Kuenn had won the 1959 batting title, but Colavito, three years younger at 26, had hit 83 home runs the previous two years and achieved a popularity that would be unmatched until Bernie Kosar 30 years later.

The next day, Lane traded Herb Score to the Chicago White Sox for pitcher Barry Latman. Score had failed to regain his blazing form after being hit in the eye by a line drive in 1957, but he remained a fan idol.

In August, with the Indians seven games out of first, Lane pulled a baseball first: He traded manager Joe Gordon for Tiger manager Jimmy Dykes. The Tribe wound up 19 games out, though Kuenn batted .308. Attendance was 950,000, down 543,000. As fans noted gleefully, that cost Lane 543,000 nickels in bonus — twice what the angry caller had predicted.

By the end of the year, Lane had made 20 trades — including Kuenn to the San Francisco Giants for Johnny Antonelli and Willie Kirkland. Russell Schneider notes in "The Cleveland Indians Encyclopedia" that it gave Lane a three-year total of 51 trades involving 118 players. One 1960 trade really galled fans: Norm Cash to the Tigers for Steve Demeter. Demeter played only four games before he was cut. Cash won the batting title in 1961 and went on to play through 1974.

The season came to a fitting end in December. The board of directors let the general manager's contract expire, in effect firing Frank "Trader" Lane.

The Cleveland Development Foundation made a modest proposal in January: Spend \$500 million to rebuild downtown, University Circle and Hough, and renovate much of the West Side. Standing by was an official of the new Federal Urban Renewal Administration, who said the government had billions available.

The plan encompassed 6,600 acres, one-seventh of the city. That was too much even for the government, but by December, the government approved Erieview, a project to put five new office buildings and 7,000 units of high-rise apartments on 125 acres downtown.

In February 1961, approval followed for University-Euclid, covering 488 acres in University Circle plus 1,000 acres of Hough, which would be saved from a future as a slum. Both projects had a five-year timetable.

"News Is Sold to Press" said the headline on Jan. 23. It was a shock to readers, and especially to employees of the Cleveland News. The paper emerged out of a 1905 merger of the Leader, the Herald and the Evening Plain Dealer. In 1932, it merged with The Plain Dealer into the Forest City Publishing Co., but it was done in by loss of population in the city and competition in the afternoon field from the Scripps-Howard paper. The Press picked up some of its staffers and briefly called itself The Press & News.

It was a cold year. March brought record lows. A chill rain forced cancellation of the Memorial Day Parade for the first time in 30 years. The July Fourth temperature was a record low 48. A cold front on Oct. 24 brought gales that damaged 26 boats on Lake Erie.

The cold weather led to furnace fires in the inner city. An elderly couple and their grandchild died on E. 81st St. in February. In November, four children died on Glendale Ave. and four on E. 96th St. Dec. 28 brought the worst: Five children died on E. 81st St.

The September fire that destroyed the Theatrical Grill caused evacuation of the Hotel Hollenden and forced out the colorful denizens of "Short Vincent's bars." Vincent Ave. was jammed with fire equipment and spectators, many of them making bets on various aspects of the scene, The Plain Dealer reported.

In other disasters, four people were killed when the Southwestern Limited derailed in Wellington in Lorain County. Two pilots died when their plane crashed in the driveway of a home on Heresford Dr. in Parma. Two young girls and their father in the house were unhurt, but two cars were smashed.



PLAIN DEALER FILE PHOTOS

Lillian Fratantonio and her daughters, Venita and Bernadette, in a family photo. The mother was convicted of drugging her daughters.

'Sleeping Beauties' wake

Two young girls come out of comas; mother comes under suspicion

By Fred McGunagle

Clevelanders took the "Sleeping Beauties" — and their distraught mother — to their hearts.

The story came to public attention in April. Little Bernadette Fratantonio had been in Mount Sinai Hospital most of the previous seven months with a mystery illness that caused her to slip in and out of a coma. Several times she nearly died; once, a doctor saved her with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Her mother, Lillian, had been with her almost constantly. The hospital had run test after test. "This is the most fabulous case I know of," said her pediatrician. "It is terrible not to be able to make a diagnosis."

The Cleveland Heights family's insurance had run out in March, but the hospital and anonymous businessmen were paying her bills. In June, Mount Sinai flew "Bernie" and her mother to Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York. That institution couldn't figure it out, either.

Then Venita, her 5-year-old sister, was stricken with the same mysterious illness and joined Bernie, now 3, in the hospital. The case attracted national attention. Life magazine did a spread. In July, The Plain Dealer ran a full page with pictures of the sleepy youngsters.

"Hush of Slumber Breaks a Mother's Heart," said the headline. The story told how "Mrs. Fratantonio, again an expectant mother and attractively plump, leaves the hospital room only for brief sleep before returning again to continue her vigil, sometimes for 20 hours a day."

She fielded calls from parents around the country who told her of their concern and their prayers. Reporters and photographers from national publications and television stations appeared often. "Lillian Fratantonio greets them patiently and with a smile. 'I'm getting used to it now,' the mother explains."

And, the story said, she opens cards and letters — 36 of them on this day, including eight with checks. Executives sent contributions; so did employees who took up collections. And there was spiritual solace. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart in New York gave her a rare cloth bearing the blood of Mother Cabrini, then the only American saint.

On Aug. 12, the illness finally was diagnosed: "Two Sleeping Beauty Sisters Were Drugged, Tests Prove," the headline in the Press read. The Mount Sinai staff had noticed that when Mrs. Fratantonio went into St. Ann Hospital to have her baby, the girls' condition improved. The hospital sent samples of their blood to Coroner Samuel Gerber, who found traces of barbiturates.

Their father, Vincent, was as-



In the driveway outside Juvenile Court, Associated Press Photographer Julian C. Wilson (on his back) was tackled by Richard LaRiche, foreground, and WJW-TV cameraman George Hixon, far right, had his camera taken away by Vincent Fratantonio, behind Hixon. The photographers wanted shots of Lillian Fratantonio, 30, center, who was sentenced to 15 weekends in the Workhouse for feeding two daughters barbiturates in the "Sleeping Beauties" mystery. LaRiche is her brother; Vincent, her husband.

tounded. "How can that be?" he asked. "Bernie's been in the hospital for almost a year now. When they were at home, they ate right with the rest of the family."

Visited by police in St. Ann's, Lillian Fratantonio confessed. She said she mixed the barbiturate with the children's milk or juice when she fed them in the hospital with an eyedropper. She had started giving the barbiturate to Bernadette because the child was "too peppy." She did not give a reason for sedating Venita.

It also turned out she was distraught because of an affair she was having with a co-worker at a drugstore. Once more, her husband was dumbfounded.

Both girls now were acting normally. "That little Bernie's a dynamo, running around the hospital," said a Mount Sinai staff member. "I can almost understand why her mother doped her."

Juvenile Court sent the girls to Parmadale while her mother awaited trial for endangering them. She



The Rev. Joseph C. Feghali consoles Vincent N. Fratantonio.

pleaded not guilty, saying police had tricked her into confessing by threatening her with 30 years in prison and loss of custody of her five children.

Prosecutor Thomas Osborne told the jury, "This case was just one heartbeat away from a homicide." Defense lawyer Leonard Krajewski argued, "Everyone knows that a mother could not do the things that Mrs. Fratantonio is accused of."

The jury found her guilty on its first ballot. "We pitied her," said the foreman. Judge Albert Woldman said of his sentencing decision, "This is a real dilemma." After exhausting her appeals, Lillian Fratantonio served a sentence in the Workhouse on weekends.

In 1962, she regained custody of her daughter — no longer the "Sleeping Beauties."

McGunagle is a Cleveland freelance writer.

Cleveland busting out all over

At first, Clevelanders were upset. How dare the Census Bureau say the city had lost 38,000 people since 1950! The census-takers must have had their eyes closed.

But then citizens took a closer look, and their chests swelled with pride. "Greater" Cleveland — a term they were learning to use — was again an American boomtown.

U.S. population had soared in the 1950s by 18.5 percent, the fastest since the first decade of the century. But Cuyahoga County was up 18.6 percent, and if you added Lake, Geauga and Medina — which would be designated the Cleveland Metropolitan Area in 1963 — population was up 24.6 percent.

Cleveland was officially 876,050,

down from 914,808 in 1950 and down from seventh to eighth among U.S. cities. Yet Cuyahoga County stood at 1,647,000, eighth among counties. The suburbs had grown by 297,000, or 63 percent. Parma had grown from 29,000 in 1950 to 82,845. Euclid was up by half to 62,998. Parma Heights went from 3,901 to 18,100, and Brook Park from 2,606 to 12,856.

Every surrounding county had grown faster than Cuyahoga. Lake nearly doubled to 148,700. Portage was up more than 90 percent to 91,798, and Geauga nearly 80 percent to 47,453. Medina rose more than 60 percent to 65,315, Lorain County nearly half to 217,500, Summit by one-fourth to 513,569.

People had been coming from Ap-

palachia and the deep South to work in the new auto plants and other factories. Many were black. Cuyahoga's black population stood at 255,310, with all but 4,492 in Cleveland. The county's median age fell to 26.9 years from 32 in 1950. In Brook Park, it was 20.7 and in Brunswick, 19.8.

Many schools were on double shifts; more than 660,000 of the four-county area's 1.9 million people were under the age of 18. Most of those were under 10. It didn't occur to Greater Clevelanders at the time, but that meant they would all be entering the work force in the 1970s, when "Help Wanted" signs might not be as common as they were in the booming 1950s.

— Fred McGunagle

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Jan. 31: Massachusetts Democratic Sen. John F. Kennedy announces he will run for president.

May 23: Israel captures Nazi death camp chief Adolf Eichmann.

June 20: Floyd Patterson becomes the first heavyweight boxer to regain

his lost championship, avenging an earlier loss to Ingemar Johansson.

July 8: The Soviet Union charges downed U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers with espionage.

Sept. 26: Kennedy and Republican Richard Nixon meet in the first of three televised presidential campaign

debates.

Sept. 28: Ted Williams hits a home run in the last at bat of his legendary career as a Boston Red Sox player.

Oct. 12: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev bangs a desk with his shoe during a meeting at the United Nations.

Nov. 9: Kennedy narrowly defeats Nixon.

Born: Daryl Hannah, Sean Penn.

Died: Film legend Clark Gable, American lyricist Oscar Hammerstein, actress Margaret Sullivan, Emily Post, French philosopher Albert Camus.