

Farminington Observer

Volume 92 Number 13

Thursday, November 27, 1980

Farrington, Michigan

144 Pages

Twenty-five cents

© 1980 Suburban Communication Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

EMS probe ignited by slow service complaint

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Farminington Hills is investigating a complaint over emergency medical service response time.

The case revolves around Warner Middle School student Renee Lederman, who required emergency care last month after choking on a piece of gum during gym class.

The 12-year-old has returned to school, but her parents are incensed over what they saw as the poor attitude and slow service of Am Care Inc. The company supplies Farminington Hills with emergency medical service.

"The manner in which this ambulance service . . . carried out their re-

sponsibilities and fulfilled their obligation to a citizen of our city falls far short of the necessities required in the performance of emergency services," said Miss Lederman's father, Robert, in a letter to Mayor Joann Soronen.

The City Council ordered City Manager Larry Savage to investigate the allegations at this week's council session.

The Ledermans said it took 20 minutes for the ambulance to arrive at the school. Warner Principal Gil Henderson and Farminington Hills Acting Fire Chief Tom Johnson agree with the Ledermans' time estimate.

During the 20-minute wait, city fire fighters and Farminington Hills police

officers tried to calm the girl and administer first aid, Johnson said.

EMERGENCY SERVICE employees told Renee's mother they had slowed down when they learned it wasn't a major medical emergency. Mrs. Lederman said.

Prior to the November election, city firefighters tried to wrest emergency medical service from the privately owned Am Care. But the City Council stood behind the firm.

The ambulance had driven to the school from Botsford General Hospital on Eight Mile and Drake in West Bloomfield in four minutes.

said Jim Shortt, director of the ambulance service.

Shortt says his records show the ambulance crew spent seven minutes at the school and arrived at Henry Ford Hospital at Maple and Drake in West Bloomfield in four minutes.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS made two phone calls in seven minutes before the ambulance arrived, Henderson said.

"In all the years I've been in this business, I've never seen this happen before. This isn't a normal experience," Henderson said.

Farminington Hills Police, whose dispatchers handle calls for the emergency medical service and the fire de-

partment, have one call on record.

By the time the ambulance arrived, Lederman says his daughter was "hyperventilating with the resultant syndrome that accompanies (choking) such as a drop in blood pressure, sweating, rapid pulse rate and pallor, which are initial signs of shock." Lederman is a podiatrist with offices on the east side.

Shortt disputes that the girl was entering into shock.

"If she had been in shock, we couldn't have taken her to a clinic," he said, referring to Ford Hospital's West Bloomfield annex.

"It wasn't a major medical emergency. We had no reason to go lights and siren," he said.

He says his employees were notified by Farminington Hills that the situation wasn't a life or death one and the ambulance slowed down.

"Whenever you run outside the traffic flow, you increase the hazard to yourself and others on the road. It's just good sense," he said.

WHILE JOHNSON denies telling the ambulance to slow down, he doesn't rule out that someone else involved in communicating with the service could have told them that.

"This proves to me," said Mrs. Lederman, "that if the city doesn't have its own unit and what you have to rely on is far away, it's got to take its toll someday."

Local woman heads Ford Hospital team

Babies given a fighting chance for survival

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farminington Hills home near 13 Mile and Drake roads.

She has some good excuses, however.

Dr. Reveri, a neonatologist (speci-

Like many new homeowners, Mona Reveri is still living out of boxes a month after moving into her



Social worker Jennifer LoPatin of Southfield cuddles a tot awaiting discharge Monday.

alizing in the care of newborn infants) works 10 hour days at Henry Ford Hospital. Most weekends she is on call and that usually means she is back at the hospital, located in the New Center area of Detroit.

"This past weekend was the first I spent in my new home," says Dr. Reveri, who moved from a Troy apartment and who is co-director of Henry Ford's 22-bed infant critical care unit.

"There used to be a time when I thought I had to phone to check on a particular baby even when I wasn't on call," she said.

"Now I normally try to make myself feel totally out of touch when I'm not there. It isn't easy."

Reveri joined the Ford staff five years ago and helped implement the special care nursery. Need grew rapidly and three years later Dr. Robert Borer joined her as co-director.

About 15 percent of the 2,500 babies delivered annually in the hospital require constant attention in the special care nursery. Because the hospital is one of five centers in the metropolitan Detroit area offering critical care for newborns, transfers add to the regular patient load.

"MOST OFTEN the 22 beds are being used," Reveri says.

In addition to overseeing the progress of sick babies, she supervises a staff of 40 to 50 physicians, nurses, aides and a social worker, all of whom team to provide around-the-clock services.

"Many times we diagnose problems before the time of birth," Reveri says.

Technology has expanded so much in the last 10 years that pre-birth problems are often diagnosed



Dr. Mona Reveri checks Thomas Shaw, 3 weeks old, while mother Yvetta Shaw of Detroit watches over her tiny son. (Staff photos by Randy Bors))

long before the mother enters the delivery room. The infant mortality rate has dropped to 12 per 1,000 live births compared to 18 to 20 per 1,000 10 years ago.

Hypertension, diabetes, heart trouble, previous miscarriages, and age (over 35/under 20) make for high-risk pregnancy candidates. As

such pregnancies are identified, steps are taken to increase the chances of survival.

Problems which compromise fetal growth are often cause for premature Caesarean births.

Preterm babies need special care for several reasons: poor defense mechanisms, underdeveloped

lungs and size (as small as 1 1/2 pounds at birth). Other reasons for newborn intensive care include lung problems, congenital malformations and congenital heart disease.

Length of stay varies from a week to six months. Average length of stay is 18 to 21 days.

(Continued on Page 8A)

Senators unveil 1981 property tax freeze plan

By C.J. RISAK

Sporting buttons with the slogan, "We got the message," state Senators Doug Ross (D-Southfield) and Bill Huffman (D-Madison Heights) and Senate Majority Leader William Faust (D-Westland) announced a plan to freeze all property taxes at their current level.

"Some of us in Lansing are getting the message," Ross said in a press conference at the Detroit Press Club Monday. "Under our proposal, your 1981 tax bill would not be one penny more, unless a local millage is passed."

Ross indicated that, depending on the

inflation rate, homeowners would receive a 10-to-15-percent cut in real cost of property taxes. Ross, who proposed the freeze and got the backing of Huffman and Faust, added that local governments and schools would bear the brunt of the \$400 million loss because of the freeze.

Property taxes support schools and local governments, Ross said. Each would lose approximately \$200 million, but the state would help make up some of the losses to the schools with other program cuts.

"When 44 percent of the people vote for Tisch it has to tell you something," said Faust in reference to the Tisch tax

proposal, a radical plan, according to most state and local politicians, that was defeated in the November election.

"With this proposal, we're saying to the taxpayers, 'Yes, we're going to do something about this and within the next year.'"

THE FREEZE will last only one year, Faust said, adding that state legislators will have to do something about the property-tax situation within that time or the property-tax assessment will rise 20 to 30 percent for 1982 because of the inflation rate.

"Property taxes are grossly unfair,"

Faust said. "They're not assigned to wealth."

"There's no question about it — (property taxes) will be the main issue in (the Legislature) in the next year. I expect to see a special election for a constitutional change on property taxes."

If approved by the Legislature, the freeze will save residential and agricultural property owners approximately \$250 million, based on an estimated rise in property assessments of 10 percent. Businesses will save \$120 million based on a 7-percent increase in property assessment.

The three senators hoped the Legis-

lature would pass the proposal by Christmas. Ross said the freeze would have to be signed into law by mid-February before property assessments go out.

"I think, with the senate majority leader (Faust) and the vice chairman of the appropriations committee (Huffman), we've got a good chance," Ross said of the proposal's odds for success. "I would hope this would get bipartisan backing since it is a bipartisan issue."

PART OF the reason for the proposal, Faust said, was to let people know that state government officials were aware of the property-tax problem and

intended to do something about it.

"All the money goes to schools and local governments, none to the state, but the people perceive it as if only the state can do something about it," Faust said.

The senate majority leader said he hopes the freeze would provide immediate help for the taxpayer without the drastic measures of proposals like Tisch, which called for a rollback in property assessments to the 1978 level and then halving that number.

Ross reasoned that it was unfair for the property taxpayer to pay white the state government came up with a fair

(Continued on Page 8A)

Firefighters could handle big blaze

With the memory of the fire at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas still fresh, Farminington and Farminington Hills fire officials are confident they could deal with a blaze in one of the area's commercial buildings.

Although those structures don't approximate the height and size of the Las Vegas hotel, their construction must fall in line with regulations contained in the BOCA building code, used by the state and the two cities.

In the code, regulations are geared toward a building's height, size and use. Buildings of more than 12,000 square feet or more than three stories high must contain a fire suppression system, according to Thomas Johnson, acting fire chief in Farminington Hills.

Although installing a sprinkler sys-

tem can be expensive to the builder, there are insurance savings as an incentive, he explained.

The installation of the sprinkler system can also allow the maximum traveling time to building exits required by the code.

Without a sprinkler system, the farthest that anyone in a store can be from the exit is 100 feet, according to Norm Maddison, Farminington fire marshal.

With a sprinkler system, that limit is increased to 150 feet.

IN BUILDINGS of public assembly, such as theaters and hotels, the distance between a person and an exit must be kept to 150 feet if there isn't a sprinkler system. With a sprinkler sys-

tem, that limit is increased to 200 feet.

The placement of fire extinguishers in offices is also covered by the code. In a store fire office, containing about 100 square feet, there should be a fire extinguisher at the front and back doors. The extinguishers, must be placed within the path of the exit so a person grabbing one doesn't become trapped by fire, according to Maddison.

Exit plans used in case of a fire must be posted in buildings which contain more than 12,000 square feet or are larger than three stories, according to Johnson.

Formulating a plan of exit is a wise idea for homeowners as well as businesses, he adds.

"It's good common sense for everyone to have a fire plan," he said.

The fire escape plan for home or office should include two different paths of departure.

Hotels such as the Botsford Inn in Farminington Hills have their own fire escape plans.

ABOUT 24 years ago, Botsford Inn owner John Anhut installed a sprinkler system throughout the main building as well as the annex.

"We have the best fire (insurance) rating," Anhut said.

In addition to the sprinkler system, the inn has smoke detectors, a fire alarm system and its own stand pipe to which fire fighters can hook their hoses.

The inn has its own emergency water supply for fires via its own line to the

(Continued on Page 8A)

what's inside

At Your Leisure 6A
Editorial Opinion 14A
Obituaries 2A
Sports Section B
Suburban Life Section C



Your Observer carrier will be stopping by this week to collect for the month. Please be ready, and be sure to save your receipt - it's worth a \$1.00 discount on the next classified ad you place in your hometown newspaper.