

State readies electrocution report

By RON GARBINSKI

The Department of Labor has received recommendations and initial reports from its inspectors probing the shop area at East Junior High School where a student was electrocuted, but the agency has not yet issued any citations for violations of the state's safety-standards acts.

"There were some violations found at East," said Keith Molin, director of the Michigan Department of Labor. "But as a result of this specific incident and the violations that existed, the department decided to conduct a more intensive investigation of the shop area."

"We are limiting our investigation to that specific facility, and our in-

vestigators should have their reports completed soon.

"The department's initial investigation of the shop area has been conducted Jan. 12, 13 and 15. At that time, it was discovered that the wires in the electrical box to which the machine was connected were bare, and that the electrical box itself was not grounded," Molin said, referring to the report from his inspectors.

Molin said the results of the investigation should be completed within a week to ten days. After the reports are reviewed, the department will then notify the school district of any citations.

"WE HAVE NOT yet completed the investigation and have not conducted our closing conference with the school

district. When we hold that conference, we will tell them what was found to be in violation of the state's safety act," the director continued. "By next week, the report and any citations will be readily available to the public."

The Department of Labor's independent investigation of the shop area at East Junior High was prompted after Oakland County medical examiners determined that Robert Kourjian's death was caused by electrocution.

Molin said that the report indicated the 15-year-old was electrocuted after touching a metal-buffer in the shop area. Apparently an arc was created when the bare wires touched in the ungrounded electrical box, he said.

According to Molin, the Department of Labor has limited jurisdiction in this specific incident because a student was involved. As the safety standards act read now, the department has no direct jurisdiction over facilities where students work while attending school.

The law is limited to facilities and only affects employees on the job at that facility.

"The penalties resulting from any citations issued by the department will be less severe in this incident because a student was involved," Molin said. "If a teacher at the school had been electrocuted, then we would have more jurisdiction and the penalty would be worse. But it is my understanding that students working in

shop areas are covered under the department of education."

WHILE THE LABOR department completes its investigation, the Farmington Hills Police are continuing their probe of the electrocution. As of Wednesday morning, a department spokesman would not comment on progress of the investigation.

On Friday, Jan. 16, the Hills detective bureau sent the buffer machine and the extension cord used with the machine to the crime lab at the state police post in Plymouth.

The state specialist in charge of examining the buffer and extension cord said Wednesday morning he had not yet started his investigation. When he completes his phase of the investigation, his report will be turned

over to the Hills department of public safety.

Lewis Schulman, Farmington assistant superintendent of secondary schools, said that as a result of the electrocution the district has been checking and rechecking all its schools.

Clarification

Some school board officials believed the article entitled "Trustees knew of buffer machine defect" in the Jan. 15 edition of the Farmington Observer & Eccentric was misleading.

To clarify the situation, the meeting spoken of in the article took place on Monday, Jan. 12, three days after Robert Kourjian died. We regret any confusion the article may have caused.

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Byrnes wants ordinance to control false alarms

By STEVE BARNABY

False alarms are becoming a problem in the City of Farmington.

That's the word from Public Safety Director Daniel Byrnes, who would like to see an ordinance established to regulate alarm systems which ring into the safety department's switchboard.

The danger exists, he says, that phone lines could get tied up with false alarms, prohibiting actual emergency calls from getting through.

False alarms have increased from 154 alarms in 1968 to 384 alarms in 1975. The figure for the first six months of 1975 indicates that the department probably received nearly 500 false alarms during 1975, according to Byrnes.

"Some businesses have more than 30 false alarms a year," Byrnes told city council this week, as they considered an ordinance which would fine homes and businesses that have continued false alarms.

"I would hope an ordinance such as this would urge those people to correct the deficiencies."

UNDER THE proposed ordinance, the Public Safety Department would have the authority to bill the person who owns and maintains a faulty alarm system \$25 for each false alarm received by the department.

The billing procedure would be implemented any time an alarm system fails to operate correctly more than two times in any 30-day period, or four times in any calendar year. An owner would have three working days after he has been informed to have the correction made.

The definition of false alarm excludes alarms that are caused by severe weather or violent conditions beyond the control of the owner of the alarm, according to the ordinance language.

"It's not our intent to discourage

persons from getting alarm systems," says Byrnes. "Rather, it is our intent to keep the alarm in good working condition."

The problem, as it now stands, exists primarily with business alarm systems, says Byrnes. But there is an increased interest among private homeowners, who tend to buy less expensive units that may become defective.

"Residential alarms really aren't a problem as of yet. There are probably only about 10 in town. My worry is if we had about 50 of them in the city, they could tie up our phone system," says Byrnes.

"I just want to stop the problem before it starts."

SOME HOME alarm systems contain a pre-recorded message. When the alarm is set off, it ties into the police phone system, notifying the department that either a fire or burglary is in progress.

The problem, says Byrnes, arises if the recording keeps repeating itself. This would keep the police line busy, disabling it from taking other incoming calls.

Under the proposed ordinance a person would need permission of the public safety department to have an alarm tied into the department's switchboard.

In his report to council, Byrnes said the increased false alarms not only tie up dispatchers and a patrol officer's time in answering the alarm, but also create a "false sense of security" that the officer in fact is responding to a false alarm, but in actuality the alarm may have been set off by a person committing a holdup or a burglary.

Up until this time local business alarms have caused the false alarm problem.

"What we are looking for is the businessmen's cooperation," says Byrnes. He cites one incident in which a

businessman had 18 false alarms in two months. The businessman neglected to get his alarm fixed even after repeated warnings from Byrnes' department. He was even given tickets for creating a public nuisance.

"This guy would let his outside alarm ring all weekend, sometimes. We finally got him to comply after writing a letter to his insurance company," says Byrnes.

Several surrounding communities, such as Detroit, Troy and Livonia already have ordinances regulating the use of alarms, says Byrnes.

"I even considered having one or two phone lines for dial-in alarms, but I don't think it is our job to serve the function of an alarm company," Byrnes told city councilmen.

The ordinance would allow certain types of high risk businesses to be connected directly with the police switchboard through the police alarm indicators on the dispatch console. A \$100 fee for installation and \$100 maintenance and monitoring fee would be charged.

Having introduced the ordinance, the council will give it further consideration.



Whoa Nelly

Who is the owner of these size 84 shoes? He delights the kids and is from Farmington Hills.

To see who this chipper fellow is turn to page 3A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Genealogy

How residents seek out ancestors

By CORINNE ABATT

The Farmington Genealogical Society has a special project planned for the bicentennial year. They are hoping to microfilm the records of the First Baptist Church and have them available in the Farmington Library.

Commenting about the project, Peter Schaldenbrand, Farmington High School math teacher who teaches genealogy evenings, says the records are valuable because the church was founded in 1828.

Another source for those tracking down ancestors in this area are tax records.

"Tax records of Farmington Township survive from 1868," says Schaldenbrand. "These are useful for establishing residency, what piece of land a person owned, when it was sold and if it went into an estate—who received it."

Few of the members of the local genealogy group have relatives from the Farmington area and until this plan for the bicentennial they have not been intent on developing a resource file of local history.

"We come for the lectures and we enjoy talking with each other," says Schaldenbrand carefully explaining that "One is never done with genealogy—you just shift from one problem to another."

THE PROBLEMS, naturally, in making a lineage chart, are in documenting each ancestor. Figuring 20 to 25 years for a generation, 10 generations would take a family back to the American revolution.

At that point the genealogist would be dealing with 512 ancestors. Schaldenbrand says to start with yourself as one. In the first generation back there are two, your parents. The number doubles with each generation. Not all of the 512 are going to be easy to establish.

"Most of the people who sign up for my classes are not beginners," he says. "They're looking for other means than they know of to establish lineage."

He puts them on to what he calls "last resort records"—tax records, voting lists, naturalizations "sometimes you are happy just to find a name in records."

The United States census is a logical place to look for ancestors, but Schaldenbrand says when the first census was taken in 1790, "only the name of the head of household was listed."

Later, more information was added. However, information found may be as confusing as it is informative.

"From 1880 to 1885 they would go house to house every year checking for anybody who had been born or died."

He says birth and death certificates were issued on the basis of this information and sometimes the family would forget they had already mentioned a baby the year before.

"We find birth certificates for the same child two years in a row. Also if a child died young, families would give another child the same name."

Schaldenbrand's interest began when his older brother filled out a wedding book listing grandparents and great-grandparents. Several months after, he and his mother went to the Burton Collection in the Detroit Public Library and he found the names of his great-grandparents in the Detroit census of the 1880s.

"This gave me sufficient information to want to continue."

He has since traced the French Canadian branch of his family back to France in the 1650s.

He says, "The Burton Collection and the Michigan State Library are the best centers in Michigan, if not the Midwest. The best center in the United States is the library of the Lat-



PETER SCHALDENBRAND

ter Day Saints in Salt Lake City. The second is the National Archives.

FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES, the Mormon Church has always encouraged genealogical research.



Mary Crane, a City of Farmington public safety phone dispatcher sits in front of the control board which Public Safety Director Dan Byrnes fears may become overloaded with false alarm calls during emergencies. (Staff photo)

Local singers join Oakway concert chorus

One of the largest choral works of all time, the Verdi "Requiem" will be performed in Mercy High School auditorium, Farmington Hills, Sunday, Jan. 25, at 4 p.m.

It will be given by the Oakway Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Francesco DiBlasi with the Kenneth Jewell Choral and a supplementary 140-voice choir of students from

four area high schools.

These are the 20 voice Madrigal Choir from Southfield-Lathrup directed by Louise Ward, 40 students from Birmingham Seaholm, Eugene Branstrom, director, 40 from Livonia Bentley concert choir directed by Jerry Smith, and the 40-voice North Choir from North Farmington High School under the direction of George T. Still.

inside

News

Gondola

Community Calendar

Editorials

Columns

Belmont Life

MM Memoirs

Club Circuit

Bridge

Sports

Classifieds

Section A

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

Section B

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

Section C

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

Section D

141

142

143

144

145

146

147

148

149

150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

163

164

165

166

167

168

169

170

171

172

173

174

175

176

177

178

179

180

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