

# Clubhouse renovation stalled by blaze at Oakland University

By KATHY PARKER

Faulty wiring in two light fixtures were responsible for a fire sible for a fire that ripped through the attic of an Oakland University clubhouse Tuesday. Heavy damage was limited to upper portions of the 63-year-old building.

That's the assessment of fire officials in Avon Township, who set the damage estimate to the building at \$25,000. OU officials, however, believe the figure is closer to \$150,000.

Richard Light, OU assistant vice-president for business affairs, said insurance adjusters will determine a final figure by Wednesday. The building carried an insured value of \$75,000. Formerly a lodge and retreat for deceased auto pioneer John F. Dodge,

the Tudor-style clubhouse was about to undergo renovation and open in the spring as a clubhouse for the adjacent Katke-Cousins golf course.

OU opened the golf course in 1977. Marvin Katke and Harold Cousins, both Bloomfield Hills residents, donated a combined \$500,000 to construct the course. They also contributed about \$50,000 to the renovation project.

Light said he does not believe the renovation will be delayed for a substantial length of time, because the fire was contained in the attic.

THE LOWER LEVEL is proposed for the major part of the renovation, where an Olympic-sized swimming pool will be closed off, locker rooms and showers installed, and a pro shop and office for the golf course pro will be built.

The upper level will remain intact and be used as a meeting room and lounge. The entire building has been used in recent years by university students seeking quarters for parties, meetings and other group activities.

The fire was reported to Avon firefighters about 3:20 p.m., 10 minutes after two workmen weatherproofing the roof noticed smoke. Avon Fire Chief Mark Belkoff estimates that the fire began about 2:55 p.m. Firemen arrived within five minutes of receiving the call, and had the fire under control within an hour, he said.

Firemen from Rochester and Pontiac Township fire departments were

on standby during the blaze and Troy Fire Chief James Halsey also was on the scene.

OU officials praised the performance of the Avon firemen and credited them with containing the fire and minimizing damages. Avon Fire Inspector Greg Wallerhouse said the firemen were aided by the new water system recently installed on the Meadow Brook estate portion of the campus.

BELKOFF SAID his loss estimate, which OU officials call low, is based on the need for a new roof on the building and some basic carpentry work.

Light said he believed the insurance adjusters would find the damage estimate "somewhere in the middle," between \$25,000 and \$150,000.

"It's very difficult to determine," he said. "Some of the wood in the building is irreplaceable. One of the virtues of what we had was that it was so old."

He said workmen have been removing some of the oak paneling and hand-carved moldings that suffered smoke and water damage. Solid oak beams, marble and polished wood floors also must be reconditioned.

Belkoff said that although the final decision will rest with the insurance adjuster, he will stick by the \$25,000 estimate, particularly since Avon Township is reimbursed for fighting fires at state-owned buildings, based solely on the insured value.



## Streetcar Named Desire

Tennessee Williams' prize winning drama, "A Streetcar Named Desire," opens in Farmington Players Barn Nov. 3 and remains for productions on three consecutive weekends. In rehearsal are standing Sha-

ron Kolhasa (at left) Sandy Dittich, John Knock and Janice Salisbury. Seated are Jack Grulke, Ron Turk, Vic Baird and Gary Strong. Tickets are available through the Players box office, 477-1066.

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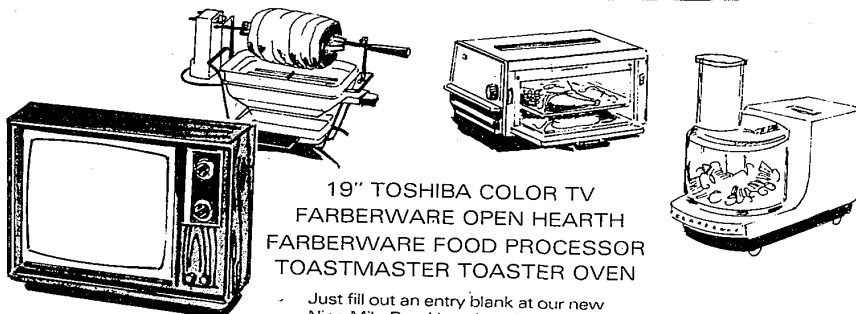
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