

Farmlington Observer

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Workers await test results in X-ray case

By MARY GNIEWEK

He employed three women and eight men at the Haggerty stamping division during the 2½ year period. MEG's main plant is located on Hathaway, just a few blocks away.

"I guess it's like smoking. You don't know the effects right away," Klaserer said.

McDonald Enterprises employed about a dozen workers during the 2½ years.

"We've been here 3½ years," said John McDonald, president. "At this time we don't know what risks or hazards we've been subjected to. The NRC will come back to us with that information."

Neither owner was aware of the alleged violations occurring at American X-Ray, nor do they plan legal action at this time.

The NRC charged American X-Ray with three violations, including transferring its license to Gorsira X-Ray, Inc. last year, which is contrary to NRC rules.

The NRC already has taken the most severe action it can against the firm by revoking its license. Srelawski said the NRC will decide today if the case will be referred to the Justice Department for further action.

American X-Ray has three weeks to show cause why its license should not be revoked. Owner Andrew Struzyk was not available for comment.

In a press release issued by attorneys for Gorsira X-Ray, the company said the NRC action against it is directed only against an unauthorized transfer of a license.

"The NRC order makes no allegation of endangerment of the public health, welfare or safety by Gorsira X-Ray," the release states.

"Gorsira has fully cooperated with the NRC in its investigation of American X-Ray and has allowed the NRC onto the premises for on-site inspection."

Gorsira X-Ray was involved in field radiography at construction sites, the NRC said. It has been ordered to return all radiation material to an authorized agent within 25 days.

Approximately 20 employees in the Farmington Industrial Center are awaiting medical reports to determine if they were overexposed to radiation from American X-Ray and Inspection, Inc. between February 1977 and July 1979.

The X-ray firm, whose license was suspended by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Feb. 28, shared a common wall with two businesses and may have exposed those employees to more than the NRC limit of 2 millirems of radiation an hour.

Owners of the businesses, MEG, Inc., a stamping plant at 24008 Haggerty, and McDonald Enterprises, a tool and die shop at 24004 Haggerty, provided NRC investigators with information about workers employed there during the 2½ years American X-Ray did industrial radiography work at 24030 Haggerty.

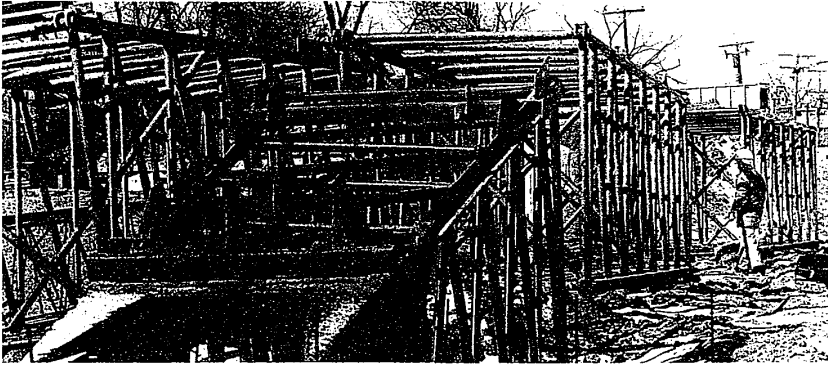
NRC medical consultants will determine if exposure was significant to harm employees. The Michigan Department of Public Health, a third party to the investigation, will receive copies of the findings, as will the employees.

"We know how much radiation was on the other side of the wall, but we don't know who was employed there at that time, or what shielding the person used. We have to make that determination," said Donald Srelawski, an NRC investigator who simulated radiation experiments to test levels of exposure during the January probe.

Srelawski said radiography work, which involves taking X-rays of heavy metal objects, was done without restricting access to the area or using fielding to reduce the radiation limit.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF overexposure can lead to cell damage and cancer, according to the state health department.

"I'm not that knowledgeable about it. I suspect what they were doing was illegal," said Bill Klaserer, president of MEG, Inc.



Now what could this be?
 This mystery structure came to Farmington last week and has risen to tower over the city. To see why it's here and what it's doing, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

Meeting is Tuesday

Middle school sports face debate

The pros and cons of intramurals versus competitive sports for sixth, seventh and eighth grade students will be discussed by Farmington school administrators and faculty Tuesday evening.

The public is invited to hear two very different sports proposals, one supported by the administration and the other by the teacher's union, proposed for implementation in the middle schools.

Tuesday's session at the administration office, 23500 Shawwassee at 7:30 p.m., is just a study of proposals. The Board of Education will adopt a final package at a later date.

Members of the Farmington Board of Education curriculum committee are Janice Rohnick, Helen Prutow and Jack Inch.

"They'll meet with the Middle School Cabinet for Implementation which includes teacher Marion Spencer and administrators Don Howell, Robert Brown, Jerry Potter, Donald Cowan and Lynn Nutter.

The middle school cabinet has accepted a proposal drafted by Farmington Athletic Director Jack Cotton. It rejected a proposal written by Warner Junior High physical education teacher Sean Whalen, a former coach.

Cotton's proposal favors a combination of interscholastic and intramural sports for seventh and eighth grade and intramurals only for sixth grade.

Whalen's report proposes elimination of all interscholastics and a greatly expanded intramural program with participation by 80 percent of the students.

The Farmington Education Association, the union which represents the district's teachers, supports the Whalen report and feels it could be accomplished with present money and staffing.

It argues the Cotton report would cost the district \$60,000 and necessitate the hiring of at least a dozen new coaches.

Here's a chance to gripe about tax assessments

Everything you always wanted to know about property assessments will be discussed Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at North Farmington High School, Thirteen Mile, east of Farmington Road.

The meeting is a regular gathering of the Staman Acres Civic Association, but the main topic of discussion will be assessment hikes. The public is invited to attend.

State Representative Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, will discuss state tax laws.

"We want to find out if we have any choice. Some people plain can't afford it," said Maryann Sherwood, association secretary.

The meeting will be held in room A-7. Participants are asked to use the east side entrance to the school.

Fire officials mystified in house explosion probe

It's not likely the cause of Wednesday night's explosion and fire in West Bloomfield's new Timbers Edge subdivision will ever be known.

A home under construction was destroyed and two others damaged in the blaze which investigators believe may have started when someone entered the unlocked construction site and pushed over a propane-fueled portable heater.

A series of explosions, probably from other heaters, accompanied the blaze.

The heaters, known as salamanders, are used to heat or dry buildings under construction.

A witness reported cars with loud mufflers going up and down the street near 14 Mile and Farmington roads prior to the fire.

However, there are no suspects as the West Bloomfield arson squad continues to investigate. And West Bloomfield Fire Chief Earl Benson does not expect further investigation to reveal who was responsible.

"THERE'S NOT much we can investigate," he said. "We know there was fuel there. We can't tell whether it was maliciously ignited. Our arson squad's going to go a little further with it."

No one was injured in the fire, which was initially reported about 10 p.m. by someone in a nearby home.

Soon after, "both the West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills emergency switchboards lit up," Benson reported, as more reports came in. The fire was near the West Bloomfield-Farmington Hills border.

"We didn't have any trouble locating it," Benson said. "It lit up the whole sky."

West Bloomfield firefighters aided by Farmington Hills firemen had the blaze under control within half an hour, according to Benson. Twelve pieces of equipment had been used by the time firemen left almost four hours later.

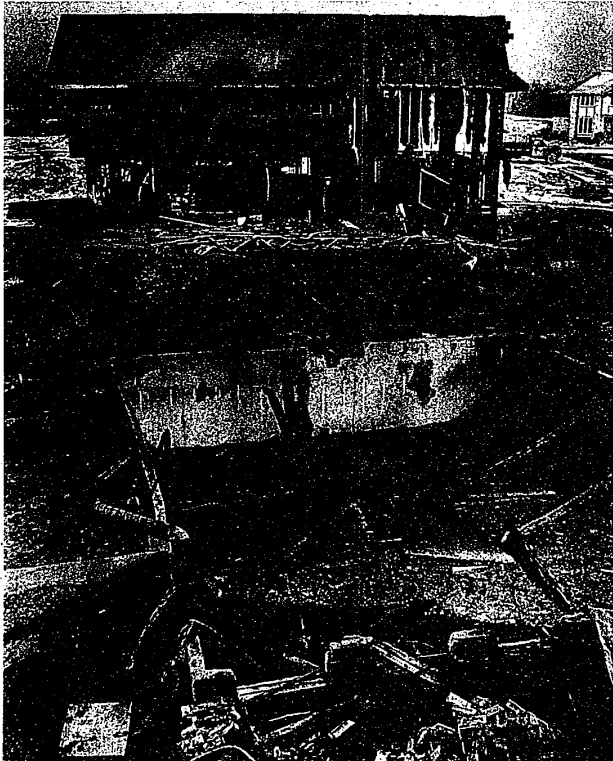
When firemen arrived, the walls were coming down in the second of the three homes, according to Benson.

"THERE WAS no sense in putting that one out. We worked to save the other two. The two side structures were substantially saved," he reported.

The demolished home, the first of 25 houses scheduled to be constructed in the new subdivision by the Richter Construction Co., was expected to be priced at \$130,000, a Richter spokeswoman said. The house was through the insulation stage of construction. No loss estimate was available late last week.

The company president was out of town at the time of the fire.

"I think this is the first time this has ever happened to him," the spokeswoman said.



A tub in the foreground and the foundation of a house are all that remain after an explosion and fire ripped through a new home under construction in the township last week. The blaze also damaged two other nearby unoccupied new homes, including the one in the background. (Staff photos by John Stano)

Bank opens new branch

Michigan National Bank of Farmington is opening its fifth branch today.

It is located in the Kendallwood Shopping Center, Twelve Mile and Farmington roads.

The grand opening, lasting through April 5, features free decorator plants and prizes of lawn mowers, lawn edgers and lawn trimmers.

Robin Spence, a resident of Farmington Hills, is the manager of the new office.

Michigan National of Farmington was founded in 1977 and is affiliated with Michigan National Corporation, Michigan's largest banking organization.

what's inside

At Your Leisure	7C	BATTER UP
Community Calendar	5B	Baseball season is just around the corner. Even now the Tigers are down south warming up for opening day just weeks away. Columnist Mike Scanlon has a few words to say about it all. To see what he has to say, turn to Monday's Commentary Page on 6B.
Monday's Commentar-	6B	
Obituaries	2A	
Sports	Section D	
Suburban Life	Section B	