

2 drown; Panic, no jackets cited

By GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

It may have been confusion, panic or possibly because they weren't wearing life preservers. But the drowning of two Detroit Country Day students Thursday in Gilbert Lake apparently had nothing to do with alcohol, according to friends and police in Bloomfield Township.

Killed were sophomore Paul Bradley, 15, and junior Corey Jones, 16, who were attending an end-of-the-school-year party at the house of Frederick and Judy Green. Both lived in Detroit.

About 20 DCD students from various grades were attending the party. At about 7:15 p.m., four students, including Jones and Bradley, were in a canoe on the lake when they met up with two girls in a paddle boat.

"We met up about half way across the lake," said Megan Boltwood, a sophomore at DCD.

Boltwood said they half-seriously decided to have a race back to the shore, knowing that a canoe should easily outdistance a paddle boat. But the boys couldn't get moving straight.

"We were all laughing," she said. The girls beat the boys to the shore, but about 90 feet out, one of the boys stood up and the canoe tipped over. "Then what happened is confusing," Boltwood said.

At first it appeared no one was in danger. Then Jones tried to swim to shore. He made it about halfway, then started to call for help.

But then "they started screaming for help," said Kathryn Sabero, who was on the shore. Sabero also is a DCD sophomore.

Again, because no one was sure if

the danger was real, they hesitated briefly to respond. When Jones called for help again, the people on shore realized the danger. Several students, Frederick Green and DCD basketball coach Kurt Keener jumped in to help.

Reportedly, one student grabbed Jones and brought him to the surface three times but was unable to hold him, according to Bloomfield Township police Lt. Jeffrey Werner. What happened to Bradley is not clear.

"When the boat overturned, they all jumped out," said Sabero. She said she saw Bradley's arm in the water, "then I saw Paul go down."

Whether he tried to swim to shore or couldn't grasp the overturned canoe is not certain.

"It was just so ridiculous," said Sabero in a voice near tears. Judy Green said she had asked

all the teens if they could swim before they went on the lake. All but one boy said yes, according to Boltwood. That boy stayed on shore.

Green and the students said alcohol was not involved in the incident.

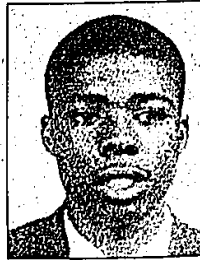
Sgt. Anthony Velat of the Oakland Sheriff's Department also said alcohol was not considered a factor.

But he said the victims were not wearing life jackets, a factor that has played in other drownings at the lake.

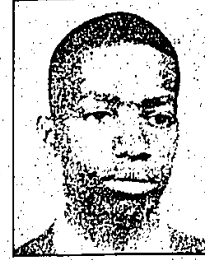
Velat said the sheriff's marine division was called to the site at 7:22 p.m. and divers were sent immediately.

Divers did not find one student until about 45 minutes later. The body of the second student was not recovered until about 10:22 p.m.

Divers tried to resuscitate the



Paul Bradley



Corey Jones

students at the scene. They were taken to St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Pontiac where they were pronounced dead.

Green said she called 911 as soon as it was apparent that there was trouble. A neighbor also called 911.

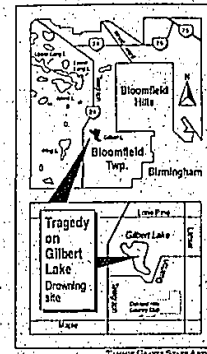
Werner said police and fire units arrived on the scene and were directed to the lake. Police immediately called the county marine division for divers.

Werner also said there was no sign of alcohol use. Although the investigation is continuing, there is no sign of foul play," Werner said.

A neighbor, Edna Evans, said she saw that "one of the boys got away from the canoe and went down. Then they both drowned."

Some of the members at the party (including Jones) were members of the DCD basketball team.

"Since the academic year has been completed and classes are no longer in session, specific plans for honoring the memory of the young men have not been finalized," the



Tragedy on Gilbert Lake Drawing: WKS

school said in a prepared statement. Bradley and Jones "were fine young men, good students and outstanding citizens," the school said.

Gilbert Lake scene of '88 tragedy

"It's a very dark, murky, muddy lake. Once you're under the surface, it's impossible to see," said Judy Green of Gilbert Lake in Bloomfield Township.

Last week two Detroit Country Day students drowned at the lake when the canoe they were in capsized during a party at her house.

Parents, students and police said the students weren't doing anything wrong and were just having some fun to celebrate the end of the school year.

They were not the first lives the

lake has claimed.

On a warm day in April 1988, James Mull, 17, of Berkley drowned when the paddle boat he and a friend had taken sank in 15 feet of water. The second youth was rescued and treated for hypothermia.

Gilbert Lake is fairly typical of the numerous lakes that dot Bloomfield and West Bloomfield Townships.

Gilbert Lake covers about 52 acres and is relatively shallow, with a maximum depth of about 25 feet.

But even at this time of year with

air temperature around 70 degrees and despite the shallowness, the lake temperature was about 65 degrees when the DCD students drowned.

With that temperature, the students were fully clothed while in the canoe. That may have contributed to their trouble swimming as wet clothes could have weighed them down, said Bloomfield Township police Lt. Jeffrey Werner.

The incident occurred at about 7:15 p.m. and the body of Corey Jones was recovered shortly after by

divers called from the Oakland County Sheriff's Department Marine Division.

The body of Paul Bradley was recovered at about 10:15 p.m.

The two were attending a private party to mark the end of the school year. When it was clear they were in trouble, several others jumped into the lake and tried to save them.

"But we just kept on diving and we couldn't get them," said Kathryn Sabero, a DCD sophomore who watched the party turn to tragedy.

ON THE AGENDA

Below are highlights from the agendas of government meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council
Council chambers
31655 11 Mile
Monday, June 8

8 p.m. — executive session
7:30 p.m. — regular meeting

The board meets at 6 p.m. to consider an executive session to discuss a consent judgement in the matter of McMahon vs. Farmington Hills.

During the regular meeting, the council will consider introducing an ordinance amendment to the nuisance law, regulating maintenance

of compost piles in residential areas; consider recommendations for naming the Polz/MDOT property; consider appointments to the Committee to Increase Voter Participation; and hear a request regarding a meeting with neighboring communities to discuss mutual interests.

The city manager will offer reports including an update on 12 Mile Road closing and boulevard construction project and consideration of approving a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for road improvements on 13 Mile Chesterbrook to west of Farmington Road.

Farmington Hills
Zoning Board of Appeals

31555 11 Mile
7:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 9
Call 473-9540 for information.

Farmington Community Library
Farmington Hills branch
Conference room

CLARIFICATION

A Page 1 photograph of the Mercy High School graduation in Thursday's Observer should have listed the following seniors in the outline (from left): Kelly Reynolds, Mary Rebb and Dana Roberts.

32737 12 Mile
5:15 p.m., Thursday, June 11
The library board will amend the current year's budget and approve the combined budget statement for fiscal year 1992-93. The director will discuss the formation of a new library cooperative of public, academic, corporate and school libraries. The board will award a bid for financial services, installment purchase contract, to fund a new automated circulation system. Staff will present updates on recent library activities.

Farmington Hills

Planning Commission
32555 11 Mile Road
7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 11
A preliminary hearing is scheduled by commissioners including site plans, revised site plans and one rezoning request. Call 473-9543 for information.

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