

## Ironworker dies at new Clarkston High

BY CAROLYN WALKER  
STAFF WRITER

A 43-year-old ironworker plunged to his death while working atop the new Clarkston High School about 10:55 a.m. Monday morning, casting a pall over the construction of the building that is scheduled to open next August on Flemings Lake Road in Independence Township.

"A lot of guys from the iron workers went home. Some of them went with him (to the hospital). These guys are just trying to deal with that," said Craig Kahler, director of business services for Clarkston Community Schools, from the scene of the accident. "You don't know how to react. You want to believe it's not true."

According to Lt. Dale LaBair of the Oakland County Sheriff's Department substation in Independence Township, Frank A. Blisett Jr., a Fenton resident, fell some 40 feet from the gym

roof while he was welding pan-

els. "He fell and we don't know whether a panel collapsed, causing him to fall or whether he fell cutting the panel to collapse," LaBair said.

Rescue personnel from the Independence Township Fire Department were called to the scene and they administered life-saving techniques but their efforts were unsuccessful and Blisett was pronounced dead at Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital, LaBair said.

A spokesperson for POH said Blisett died of head and chest injuries.

Blisett, who was married and had one son and one daughter, was an employee of Cadillac Iron Company of Sterling Heights. An employee there who answered the phone said the company would make no comment on the accident.

On Monday afternoon, field safety officers from the Michigan

Occupational Safety and Health Act (MSHA) went to the scene to investigate and try to determine what caused the incident.

It is required under state law that MSHA investigate accidents and report violations where fatalities occur or where three or more individuals are injured in a single incident, said David Foster, regional supervisor for the construction safety division.

Foster said it could be days or even weeks before they know exactly what caused Blisett to fall to his death.

Blisett was a lifelong resident of Fenton. He was a 1975 graduate of Central Michigan University and was a member of local No. 25 of the International Association of Bridge Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers.

He is survived by his wife, Yolanda; son, Frank III of Sault St. Marie; daughter, Elizabeth Blisett of Fenton and a host of other relatives.

BY TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

The road funding work of the Michigan Legislature got less than a perfect report card from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Meanwhile, a key state legislator called for a comprehensive look at road safety, including prohibiting passengers in the bed of a pickup truck.

SEMCOG, a seven-county planning agency, said the legislative package will raise just \$257 million for road repair, "less than half of the \$675 million needed and sought in the SEMCOG principles."

The staff report, signed by Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG's transportation programs director, said the Legislature drifted from using one fund for distribution.

Three cents of the gas tax will continue to be distributed through the Act 51 (of 1951) formula, as will the one-time \$69 million (from interest on the state's "rainy day" fund). The remaining one cent of gas tax increase goes directly to the state's critical bridge account," Palombo wrote.

He said the Legislature did write in efficiency standards, cost savings and reforms. He said the new laws require state Treasury audits of local road agencies, require the Michigan Department of Transportation to implement new pavement manage-

ment system, and limit state and local administrative costs to 10 percent of revenues.

They also require competitive bidding and that contractors to provide warranties of their work.

Meanwhile, a key state legislator called for a comprehensive look at road safety, including prohibiting passengers in the bed of a pickup truck.

Citing the Jackson County crash that claimed 11 lives, Fitzgerald called for prohibiting passengers from riding in the backs of pickup trucks.

The House in 1992 passed such a bill sponsored by then-Rep. William Koith of Garden City, but it died in the Senate when farm interests objected.

Fitzgerald's package of bills, supported by Gov. John Engler and Secretary of State Candice Miller, would:

- Require use of seat belts and make it a primary offense. Fitzgerald said at the contentious such a law could lead to civil rights abuses. Michigan requires seat belts but allows police to enforce the law only when a driver is stopped for another offense.
- Place more restrictions on second and third offenders.
- Regulate jet skis and personal watercraft on state waterways.
- Tighten oversight of limousine drivers — a response to the crash that critically injured two members of the Red Wings.

## Annual R-Gang Car Show peels out Aug. 10

The third annual R-Gang Car Show, a family-oriented car show highlighting classics and hot rods from the early 1930s to the 1990s, will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 10, in Clintonwood Park in Independence Township.

The show is co-sponsored by the R Gang Rods and Kustoms Club

and Independence Township Parks and Recreation. All proceeds will be donated to Ronald McDonald House of Detroit, located on the grounds of Children's Hospital.

Admission to the show is free, as are all of the activities associated with the show including adult

and children's games. The show raises money through car registration fees, sponsor awards and a raffle.

Car entrants pay \$10 to register. For more information, call Mike Green at (248) 969-0025 or Shannan Shidler at (248) 625-7419.

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