

PSC Probes Utility Bills



PARENTS AT Clarenceville's Botsford Elementary School, grateful for her services, recently presented "Grandma Frankie" with thermal clothing for her use as a volunteer crosswalk guard at Angling Road. For several years "Grandma Frankie" has safely guided children across Angling Road at the Deering Street intersection in Livonia. She is flanked by Barry Rogow (left) and Stuart Sherman.

The Michigan Public Service Commission has ordered a full-scale investigation of the billing practices of Michigan's 118 electric, gas, water and telephone utilities. Purpose of the public hearings, which will start Jan. 23, is to determine if present billing procedures are in the best interests of consumers and if they should be modified to meet changing conditions. It will be the first full investigation of utility billing procedures ever conducted by a state public utility regulatory commission. Commissioners Lenton G. Sculthorp of Marshall and William R. Ralls of Okemos signed the order.

"WITH THE ADVENT of the consumer rights movement in our society, the equity of utility billing practices has become a question nationwide in scope," Commissioners Sculthorp and Ralls said. Ralls, who proposed the investigation, said he is "deeply concerned about present utility billing practices concerning late payment

charges and the time in which a customer has to pay without a penalty being imposed. "Because of the monopoly position of utilities, customers have no other seller of utility service available to them. It is, therefore, the obligation of our agency in upholding the public interest, to insure that all facets of utility billing practices are fair and reasonable," he said. Sculthorp said he is "vitaly concerned" that utility billing practices are fair and reasonable to both the company and its customers. The billing practices of Michigan utilities vary widely.

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Blind Aid Bill Passage Hailed By Pursell

LANSING State Sen. Carl D. Pursell (R-Plymouth) has lauded Senate passage of a bill to extend state retirement benefits to approximately 100 blind or partially sighted persons. Those included operate vending stands under control of the Bureau of Blind Services.

"Passage of this House-sponsored bill greatly assists the blind involved in vending operations programs," said Pursell.

"I feel strongly that these people should be eligible for state retirement benefits. They are hard-working, self-sustaining persons who have overcome their handicaps and are determined not to be a burden on the state. It is only proper that we encourage this sort of initiative."

The bill, introduced in the House by Rep. Robert Mahoney (D-Detroit), who is blind, was pushed through the Senate by Pursell.

It provides that the employer cost of retirement and social security for the blind vendors shall be funded from money appropriated annually by the Legislature to the Department of Social Service, which oversees the program.

When signed by Gov. Milliken, the new law will become effective Jan. 1.

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and through the Village streets each afternoon add the sounds of Christmas to the sights of an earlier holiday period. And in the Museum, scheduled performances of Christmas music played on antique instruments.
ON STAGE! PUSS IN BOOTS
The Greenfield Village Players present a joyous and witty musical adaptation of this well-known fairy tale in the Museum Theatre. Performance Dec. 16. Separate admission. Adults—\$2.25. Children—\$1.00. For performance schedule, call 271-1620, extension 386.
Christmas Gifts
Fine books, toys, glass and pewter reproductions, and handcrafted articles on site in the Museum, Village Giftshop and General Store.
DECORATED HOMES
Village visitors may go in many of the homes and see how their original occupants would have decorated them in an earlier century.
Christmas Season Hours: Weekdays 9-5, Weekends 9-6. Closed on Christmas and New Year's Days. Admission: Adults—\$2.25. Children 6 through 14—\$1.00. For additional general information, phone 271-1620.

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