

# Farmington Observer

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## Family vacation tradition ends in death

By Jean Adamczak  
staff writer

The Louis DiCicco family always looked forward to summer vacations together.

"Everybody looked forward to it. It was a good time for fathers and sons to be together. We do this yearly," Janice DiCicco said about her family's vacation.

She sat in her Farmington Hills home on Friday with daughter, Laura, and a close friend waiting for word from the Canadian government on when the bodies of her husband, Louis, 44, and sons David, 11, and Christopher, 9, would be coming home.

The three died in a boating accident last Tuesday while fishing on Bruce Lake, Ontario.

DiCicco's father, Wilbur Elcher, 65 of West Bloomfield, also went on the fatal fishing trip. As of Friday morning, Canadian authorities were still searching Bruce Lake for his body.

"I never suspected this — nobody did," DiCicco said in a tear-choked voice.

HER FAMILY left Michigan June

**'Louis lived every day to its fullest, and he loved to have a lot of people around.'**

— Diane Karp  
neighbor

21 for her brother's home in Isanti, Minn. She stayed in Isanti with her mother, daughter and sister-in-law, while the men drove on to Bruce Lake, Ontario, about 500 miles north of Minnesota.

One of DiCicco's sons, John, 15, stayed home to attend summer school, she said.

"The men left Minnesota on Friday afternoon to go up and spend a week fishing. We found out about the accident on Tuesday (June 25), between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m.," DiCicco said.

The men stayed at the Trout River Lodge, near Bruce Lake, according to John Paquette, constable of the Ear Falls, Ontario Provincial Police Post.

Conditions on Bruce Lake were "rough" when the accident occurred, said Paquette.

"The owner of the lodge asked them (the fishermen) not to go out, but they went anyway," Paquette said in a telephone interview on Friday.

None of the victims wore life jackets despite the four- to five-foot waves on the 3- by 4 1/4-mile lake, the constable said.

A total of 12 males went out in three 16-foot aluminum boats, four males to each boat, Paquette said.

"YOU WOULDN'T want to be out there in a boat that size with those waves. I can't understand why they went out there in the first place," he said.

DiCicco said her brother, Dennis Elcher, told her the waves were "no higher than any others they had been in before."

"It was a set of freaky circumstances," DiCicco said, describing the accident.

"The (boat) motor died, that was freaky, too many people in one boat, it was all freaky," she explained.

"Going over all of this isn't going to change the fact."

The deaths took place after two of the three boats capsized. Only one of eight persons in the two capsized boats, Dennis Elcher, survived.

He called his sister, Janice, and told her not to travel to Canada, that the authorities were looking for the bodies.

NEIGHBORS IN THE Woodstream Farms subdivision where the DiCicco family resides, remember Louis DiCicco and his sons as "well-liked" and "terrific."

"They were an all-American, terrific family and neighbors," said neighbor Betty Tarver.

"Mr. DiCicco always did a lot of nice things with the kids," she said.

"Louis lived every day to its fullest, and he loved to have a lot of people around," said neighbor Diane Karp.

"David and Chris were well-



David DiCicco



Chris DiCicco

mannered and respectful, and we'll all miss them very much," she added.

"Both David and Chris were well-liked and did very well in school," said Frank Casun, principal at Eagle Elementary School who knew both boys.

Chris would have been a fifth grader at Eagle in the fall. David would have

been a seventh grader at Warner Middle School.

"Think of a positive description and that was David," said Warner principal Walter Scobie.

Farmington schools assistant super-

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## This trooper tells why buckling up saves lives

By Jean Adamczak  
staff writer

During his 12 years as a Michigan State Police trooper, David Haire has been at the scene of more automobile accidents than he can remember.

Perhaps that is why he is so adamant when it comes to discussing Michigan's mandatory seat belt law which goes into effect July 1.

"It's so senseless not to wear seat belts," Haire said during a recent interview at the Michigan State Police post in Northville.

"(Traffic) fatalities can be prevented, there's just no doubt about it," Haire said.

In 1984 there were 1,550 traffic fatalities in Michigan, according to state police records.

Of those fatalities, state police said

that 980 people had seat belts available to use in their vehicles. Of those killed, 891 did not use seat belts, and 69 people who did buckle up died, according to police.

As of June 23 this year, state police have recorded 811 traffic fatalities in Michigan.

Of those fatalities, state police said 410 had seat belts available to use in their vehicles. Of those killed, 358 people did not use their seat belts, and 54 people who did use their belts died, according to police records.

"Using seat belts would prevent about 80 percent of the traffic fatalities we have now," Haire said.

In Oakland County, state police have recorded 81 traffic fatalities as of June 9, 1985.

OF THOSE FATALITIES, 49 people had seat belts available to use in their

vehicles, according to state police. Of those killed, 43 people did not use their seat belts and six who did lost their lives, according to state police.

"It's people's general idea that, 'Hey, it (accident) won't happen to me,' but it does happen," said Haire.

"I can't tell you for a fact that someone who was killed in an accident and didn't wear a belt would be alive today if they had had a belt on," Haire explained.

"But what I can tell you is that there have been many times, in my own opinion, where I'm sure in my mind that a person's injuries may have been minimized or a life would have been saved had seat belts been worn."

Haire refutes the argument that people are sometimes safer without the

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ROY SMITH/staff photographer

Trooper David Haire of the Michigan State Police Post in Northville, demonstrates the proper way to wear a shoulder harness safety belt. Beginning July 1, all Michigan drivers and front seat passengers will be required to wear the safety belts available in their vehicles.

## B-Day: Safety belt use now mandatory

By Jean Adamczak  
staff writer

Proponents of the mandatory seat belt law are hailing its July 1 implementation by noting it is the best way to cut highway traffic deaths.

The move to crack down on traffic fatalities and injuries in Michigan through a mandatory seat belt law was three years in the making.

On July 1 the law will go into effect, requiring all Michigan drivers and front seat passengers to buckle up or run the risk of paying a \$10 fine.

Under the new policy, the (mandatory) seat belt law is the most effective, most immediate and will not cost the taxpayers money," said Tom Reel, executive secretary for the Michigan Coalition for Safety Belt Use in Lansing.

As of August 1984, only one other

state, New York, had a mandatory seat belt law, says Reel. That state has already reduced its traffic fatalities by 27 percent, he says.

Other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France and Great Britain have had mandatory seat belt laws for some time, says Reel. Of those countries, Great Britain has attained a 93 percent usage level, the highest Reel says he has ever seen.

"OUR GOAL in Michigan is to get a 70 percent usage level. At this level, 300 lives a year could be saved as well as preventing 8,000-10,000 serious injuries," Reel said.

Currently, 25.8 percent of front seat occupants use seat belts in Michigan, according to Reel. Last year, the percentage was around 19 percent, he says.

Within the last couple of years, Oakland County has been among the high-

est in the state as far as seat belt usage goes, with a 25 percent usage level, according to Reel.

"Well-educated suburban drivers are the ones who seem to be more aware of using seat belts and have responded accordingly," Reel said.

In a telephone poll conducted recently by a research firm in Farmington Hills, 83 percent of the 600 people polled said they supported the law, and 83 percent said they will buckle up come July 1, says Reel.

"Most of the reaction we get is fairly positive," he said. "But we're not going to win them all over."

THE SPECIFICS of the law are as follows:

- Under the law, all drivers and front seat passengers must wear a properly adjusted and fastened safety

belt. Children under age four must still be properly protected in a child car seat.

- A \$10 fine is in store for those drivers and passengers who refuse to buckle up. The fine will increase to \$25 after Jan. 1, 1986.

- A law enforcement officer cannot stop a driver just because the driver does not have a seat belt on. Enforcement of the law is a secondary action when the driver has been stopped for suspected violation of another traffic offense.

- "What we're hoping is that officers will remind people first and issue a warning before writing a ticket," Reel said.

- If the unbelted person is under the age of 18, the driver will receive the traffic citation. If the unbelted person is 18 or older, that person will receive the citation. Failure to comply with the

law is a civil infraction. No penalty points will be assessed to your driving record.

- The law excludes buses, motorcycles, mopeds, commercial or U.S. Postal Service vehicle which makes frequent stops and motor vehicles being operated by a rural carrier of the U.S. Postal Service while serving a rural postal route.

- Bus drivers must comply with the law, although individual passengers are exempt.

- Vehicles manufactured before the date of Jan. 1, 1985, are exempt from the law. If an older model vehicle does not have the shoulder harness as newer cars do, use of the lap belt alone is permitted.

- The law exempts drivers or passengers who possess a written verification

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## Cop shop for Hills under way

By Joanne Moliszewski  
staff writer

At long last, construction will begin this week on a new Farmington Hills police facility with completion expected by the spring of 1985.

The proposed 32,000-square-foot triangular police building will be a welcome relief to police department employees who have worked in cramped, 7,500-square-foot quarters for some.

A \$3.2 million bid has been awarded to the A.J. Anderson Construction of Mount Clemens for the construction of the proposed 32,000-square-foot facility. The new police building will be adjacent to the existing city hall at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

THE COST of the project includes construction of the facility plus all site improvements. Site improvements include the purchase of a lot adjacent to the parking lot of the existing police building, as well as drainage improvements, new entrances to the city hall and a driveway around the entire complex, said City Manager William Costick.

"Not all of it is attributable to the police building alone," said Tom Biase, director of the public services department.

Once the new building is completed, some rearranging of space will take place within the existing city hall. Some city offices and employees, who are also in need of additional space, most likely will be moved into the old police building.

To help finance the project, bonds totaling \$2.7 million were sold June 18 by the city's Building Authority at an 8.3 interest rate, Biase said. The remaining costs will be financed through approximately \$700,000 in surplus funds, Costick said.

In addition, the costs of landscaping

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## C'ville adopts homework policy

By Arlene Funka  
special writer

Students in the Clarenceville School District can expect a more consistent load of homework when classes begin next fall.

The pupils' parents also will know exactly what is expected of them on the subject of homework.

The Clarenceville School Board recently adopted a policy calling for new guidelines on how and when homework will be assigned at all K-12 grade levels.

The guidelines — which include instructions for parents — were drawn up by a 10-member committee of teachers, administrators and principals in the district.

"The (previous) policy was very vague," said Dan Kelly, principal of the junior high school and chairman of the committee. "Teachers interpreted it differently and applied it differently and to different degrees."

Under the new policy, "parents will have a better idea of what is expected of their students," according to Kelly. The policy "will be a focal point for a lot of home-school communication," he added.

"I think it's going to have a pretty good impact at all (grade) levels," Kelly said.

THE CLARENCEVILLE district encompasses portions of Livonia, Farmington and Redford Townships. Previous guidelines, adopted many years ago, state only that homework will be assigned at the teachers' discretion.

"There were no guidelines — it was strictly a policy," Kelly said.

The new guidelines came as a result of a survey spearheaded by Superintendent Michael Shilber, who came to the district one year ago. Approximately 1,500 people, both employees and residents, responded and expressed their educational priorities.

Sixty percent of the respondents gave the Clarenceville district an A or B rating. Shilber said. A substantial number said they favored a policy on homework, according to Kelly.

As the homework policy goes forth, other district planning committees are studying curriculum, competency testing and programs for talented and gifted students.

"All these things we are trying to do

is raise our expectations and our standards for the district," Shilber said.

The new policy calls for homework to become an "integral aspect of the instructional program." The policy will include guidelines for both teachers and parents and a plan for implementation.

Homework "expectations" are to be minimal at the kindergarten level — perhaps a shared learning experience between child and parents, such as a drawing or coloring a picture. These expectations and assignments are to increase as the students proceed through their school years.

"HOMEWORK NEEDS to be carefully planned, and there must be quick

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Due to the July 4 holiday, we will be closed Thursday. To place your classified ad in our July 4th issue (being distributed Wednesday, July 3rd), please call today between 8 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.

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**JULY 4**

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