



Farmington school bus driver Sharon James searches for information about a student in the new, on-line transportation computer. This is the first year the department has computerized.

Making all stops

School bus drivers are anything but yellow

By Casey Hane
staff writer



Farmington bus driver and trainer Pam Pointon shows the card all drivers now carry to monitor bus fuel usage. This will be monitored on a personal computer at the bus garage.

EVEN WITH new high-tech information, their department still has a very human, caring aspect, transportation supervisors at Farmington Public Schools say.

"None of this would work if it weren't for the drivers. They get out there and make it work," said supervisor Julie Teddy, who runs the department with co-supervisor Malen Terry. "I like to think the drivers here are exceptional."

As 82 full-time and substitute drivers finish up training in preparation for a new school year, the entire department is adjusting to an on-line computer system that gives specific information and routes for the 85 percent of the student population taking the bus each school day.

It also stores information about each of the district's 11,000 students. This new system has changed not only the internal workings of the department, but how information is given to parents, principals and others.

THIS WEEK, parents should receive a card in the mail for each school child, giving information on the school, school bus stop and approximate time the bus will pick up their child.

The cards should free time for employees who normally field 500 calls per day in late August and early September with questions about bus schedules.

"This should remove any doubt parents might have about their children's bus stop and route," Teddy said.

The new system is called the Transportation Information Management Systems, or TIMS, and is administered through Oakland Intermediate Schools in Pontiac.

Districts including Farmington, West Bloomfield, Huron Valley, Lake Orion and Southfield, which piloted the program, are all connected to the OIS mainframe computer. "Initial start-up (of the school year) is extremely difficult for transportation and operations," said Floyd Smith, who coordinates the program for Oakland Schools.

"We see it (TIMS) as a fantastic move not only in providing safety, but it gives a trail of information about each student."

"It allows a district to put its fingers on the pulse of the entire operation."

THE FARMINGTON transportation department is a large one, with some 100 employees and 87 buses

The buses log 800,000 miles per year, according to Teddy.

The department has nearly doubled since 1974, when Teddy began with the district. Then, there were 42 drivers, substitutes were handled on a call-in basis, and there were no bus aides.

"It takes an unusual concern for kids and a lot of patience," Teddy said about drivers. "Once they find they have it, they stay."

Youth to stand trial in death of Canton girl

By M.B. Dillon
staff writer

Christopher Machacek, one of two youths accused of murdering a Canton Township girl in December 1986, is scheduled to go to trial Monday before Washtenaw Circuit Judge Henry Conlin.

Machacek and Steven Stamper, both 17-year-olds from Ypsilanti Township, are charged with open murder in connection with the shooting death of Mary Hulbert, 13.

Stamper's case is set for Sept. 19. The juvenile murder case is the first in Washtenaw County in 20 years.

Stamper and Machacek have been held without bond in Washtenaw County Jail since June 1987, when Washtenaw Probate Judge Judith Wood ruled that they should be tried as adults. The youths were 16 at the time of Hulbert's death. Both will be tried by jury.

Wood conducted a 17-week evidentiary hearing before rendering her decision, which defense attorneys appealed and Conlin upheld.

Hulbert's bullet-ridden body was found in a Superior Township field by hunters Jan. 7, 1987.

TRIAL DATES have been rescheduled on numerous occasions to allow Conlin time to rule on several motions, and because more than 5,000 pages of testimony had to be transcribed.

One motion involved the admissibility of taped statements made to Washtenaw County sheriffs, in which Stamper and Machacek blame each other for the killing. Conlin has allowed the statements into evidence.

The defense argued that sheriffs, conducting an investigation Judge Wood termed "the worst in 13 years" in Washtenaw County, obtained the statements illegally.

Richard Digon, Machacek's attor-

ney and a former Washtenaw County public defender, contended that sheriffs violated the boys' Miranda rights. Under Miranda, suspects are entitled to legal representation and the right to remain silent under questioning.

Machacek's legal guardian wasn't present when sheriffs questioned him. The youth also was denied the right to an attorney, Digon said.

Jeffrey Strouss, Stamper's attorney, has argued that his client was arrested and detained for hours without probable cause, in violation of his Fourth Amendment rights.

Prosecutors argued that the youths were free at any time to leave the station where they were being interrogated.

Conlin agreed, saying that what took place was "just a frank discussion about the facts of the case."

Defense attorneys have said they will appeal Conlin's decision if the youths are found guilty.

CONLIN ALSO is admitting into evidence a gun police found in Stamper's house.

Denied was a motion seeking a change of venue. The defense argued the trial should be conducted outside the county because of pretrial publicity. A national teen magazine and a TV magazine show did stories of the murder.

According to testimony, Hulbert thought she was pregnant by one of the boys. She was taken by Machacek and Stamper to a field where the boys intended to shoot rifles into the air, scaring Hulbert enough to induce a miscarriage.

An autopsy showed the seventh grader was not pregnant. Hulbert was shot seven times. She was killed by a bullet that ruptured her heart.

Hulbert had been missing since Dec. 30 when the Stevenson Junior High School student failed to return home.

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Police have no solid leads in execution-style slaying

Police are seeking leads in the execution-style murder last week of an unemployed, 28-year-old Farmington Hills man who was found shot to death in a deserted Macomb County riding stable.

Shahpour Tavangar, a legal alien originally of Iran who lived in the Cordoba apartment complex near 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road, died of gunshot wounds to the head. The body was found early Aug. 16 near Washington Township.

"We have no solid leads at this time," said Lt. Dan Mentzer of the Macomb County Sheriff's Department. "We are continuing to make contacts, and we are conducting a background investigation."

"We are particularly interested in talking with anyone familiar with Tavangar's daily routine or his associates. There is a possibility he was involved in wrongdoing but I will not elaborate on any details at this time," Mentzer said.

Shahpour's older brother and mother are expected to arrive from their home in Turkey to claim the body today or tomorrow, according to Mentzer. Tavangar had lived in the United States for approximately 15 years.

Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call the Macomb County Sheriff's Department at 466-8700 weekdays or 469-5151 nights and weekends.

Crime rate was stable for area

The crime rate in Farmington remained stable through the first half of the year, although the index for major crimes in the city decreased slightly.

According to a June report from the public safety department, the major crime index, which includes assaults, burglaries, larcenies and vehicle thefts, had decreased 6 percent overall, compared with the same time period last year.

But individually, car thefts and attempted thefts both increased.

Less-severe crimes, including liquor law violations, weapons violations and drug violations in the city, increased from 478 incidents to 513. Public safety director Frank Lauboff said a nearly 68 percent increase in liquor law violations is due to concentrated enforcement in that area. Arrests for the same, drug-related crimes also increased.

GOP Scatterblitzers enjoyed buscapade

NEW ORLEANS — Remember the Scatterblitzers? The 40 young Republicans who embarked by bus from Oakland Community College a couple of days before the national convention?

Well, they had a great time along the way and arrived safely, said Suzanne Miller, the 23-year-old Kemp delegate from Farmington Hills who led the group.

"At each stop, we promoted the state of Michigan and a Republican candidate," she said.

"WE DID A state senate race in Ohio. We went door-to-door in Dayton, and we handed out 'Say Yes to Michigan' brochures, which people thought was great."

"Our second stop was in Jackson, Tenn., for an open congressional seat. The candidate's name is Ed Bryant. We received the key to the city from the mayor who is a Democrat, and the first question he asked me was if we knew Dick Headlee, 'Republican frugality.'"

which was kind of funny.

"We went door-to-door there and handed out Michigan apples."

"The best part was when we went into a beauty salon. All the ladies had these big dryers on. As we went in, they all flipped their hair dryers off at the same time and listened to us talk about the candidate."

"OUR THIRD stop was in Jackson, Miss., for an open congressional seat vacated by a Democrat. We handed out these little Michigan cherry stickers."

"People there were like, 'Oh, we're so glad you're here from Michigan.' We had more offers to come in for food tea than I've had in my whole life."

"Most of our people were from 18 to 30, with a few in the chaparone age, from all over the state."

Staying in a nearby college dorm, the group spent \$500 for this week. Said an admirer standing nearby: "Republican frugality."