

Boy faces court hearing

8 vehicles crash in wild chase after 11-year-old

An 11-year-old Cass City area boy who wanted to get away from his brothers faces three charges in Probate Court, the result of his having taken his grandfather's pickup, driving it to Bay City and leading police in a wild chase that resulted in the smashup of eight vehicles.

The incident took place Saturday afternoon. Once caught, the boy first said he wouldn't talk until he saw a lawyer.

According to Hampton Township Patrolman William Edmonds, who apprehended the boy, he will be petitioned into Sanilac County Probate Court on charges of reckless driving, fleeing and eluding and no operator's license.

The decision on what charges to seek was a joint decision between his department and Bay City Police, he indicated.

Disposition of juvenile cases is normally handled in the county where the youngster lives, not where the offense takes place. The boy has a Cass City address but lives in Sanilac county.

Edmonds, who took part in the police chase, said the boy was only about 4 feet tall and presumably stood up to drive. To the rear of the pickup, he couldn't be seen and from alongside could barely be seen.

The incident began when

the boy took the truck, which had the keys in it. The grandfather lives next door to the home of the boy's parents.

He noticed it missing about 3 p.m. but originally thought his son had taken it.

He reported it missing to Sandusky state police shortly before police in Bay City notified the boy's parents of what had happened. (State police at Sandusky declined to tell the Chronicle Tuesday whether the boy might also be charged with the theft of the truck. Presumably that would require the grandfather to first sign a complaint.)

POLICE FIRST BECAME involved when a motorist called Bay county central dispatch to report he had passed a slow-moving pickup on M-25 between Quinnessee and Bay City, driven by a boy who appeared to be about 12 years old.

Edmonds received the message over the police radio while in his patrol car at Hampton Square Mall, saw the pickup, turned on his lights and siren and gave chase.

The boy speeded up and Edmonds called on his radio for more help.

Bay City police headed for the Center Avenue area and a second Hampton township police car, driven by Sgt. Robert Gudenau, entered the chase several hundred

yards behind.

Edmonds said he was going 75 miles per hour as the boy entered the downtown Bay City area.

Bay City Patrolman Richard Gonyea, who received the message over his radio,

headed east on Center Avenue (M-25). He tried to use his patrol car to block the speeding pickup, but pulled away at the last minute to avoid a collision.

The truck sideswiped the cruiser and tore away its rear bumper.

THE FIRST HAMPTON township patrol car, driven by Edmonds, went by and Gonyea made a U-turn to join in the chase.

Instead, he and the second Hampton township car, driven by Gudenau, collided.

Gudenau's car then slammed into a parked pickup, resulting in an injury to the officer and demolition of the front end of his car. He was taken to Bay Medical Center, where he received 20 stitches in his forehead and was sent home to recuperate.

The impact sent the pickup and the two cars parked in front of it a full parking space forward in a chain reaction collision. A parked van also received damage. That took place in front of the J.C. Penney store.

Meanwhile, the boy had continued on Center Street but failed to make the turn

where the street ended at Wenonah Park and turned onto Water Street. His pickup crashed into a parked car near the Mill End Store, which brought his vehicle to a halt.

The boy got out and started running, but was caught by Edmonds, who got out of his car and gave chase on foot.

It was about 5 p.m. when the chase ended, about 15 minutes after Bay City police first got the call.

WHEN EDMONDS GOT the boy back to his patrol car, according to the officer, the boy said, "I want a lawyer," then refused to say any more. (The officer told the Chronicle he didn't know if the boy knew the significance of what he had said about wanting an attorney.)

The name on the vehicle registration inside the pickup enabled police to notify the owner and the boy's parents and determine his identity.

After that, Edmonds said, he became talkative. He told the officer he had been in a

fight with a brother and his brothers picked on him, so he wanted to get away.

The officer asked him if he lived on a farm and knew how to drive the pickup from driving a tractor. The boy replied he had driven a tractor "a little."

He complained of a headache, so was taken to Bay Medical Center, where he was checked. Nothing was discovered wrong.

It was originally thought the youth lived in Tuscola county, so Tuscola Probate Judge W. Wallace Kent Jr. was contacted. He gave permission to take the boy to the Bay county juvenile home.

The home was full, however, so he was turned over to the custody of his parents, who came and got him.

Police could not release the boy's name because he is a juvenile and declined to give his grandfather's name, as that would lead to identity of the boy.

Damage to all the vehicles involved was estimated by Bay City police at \$20,000.



FIRST BABY OF 1980 -- Florence Wolschleger looks at son Keith Bernard, the first baby born in 1980 at Hills and Dales General Hospital. He arrived at 2:22 a.m. Friday and weighed 7 lb., 13 oz. Mrs. Wolschleger and husband Richard have two other children at their home in Ruth, Ricky, 6½, and Kerry, 5. Dr. Sang H. Park delivered the new baby.

McDonald Dairy collapse costs farmers thousands of dollars

By Mike Eliasohn

The demise of the McDonald Cooperative Dairy Co. will mean a loss for some dairy farmers of thousands of dollars.

How much of a loss partly depends on how much McDonald's gets from sale of its assets and partly on how one defines a loss.

Lewis Babich of Gifford Road, Deford, had about \$10,000 in stock in the cooperative, stock which is now worthless.

But Michael Walsh of Cumber Road, Ubly, says members never paid anything for the stock so "aren't really losing anything." He had more than \$5,000 in stock certificates. He admitted, "It sure would have been nice if we had got something."

The dairyman has been a district director of the cooperative for several years.

operation using the McDonald's brand name.

It is leasing McDonald's facilities in Benton Harbor, Chesaning and Otsego, pending a future decision whether to keep them in operation. The MMPA did not assume any of McDonald's reported \$24 million debt.

Rationale of the takeover from the MMPA's standpoint was to provide market stability.

According to its magazine, Michigan Milk Messenger, "McDonald Cooperative Dairy Co. has been the state's largest single processor of dairy products. Not more than half of the milk of McDonald's former members could be handled in all other Michigan plants combined."

McDONALD'S PAID milk checks to its members through October.

For the period Nov. 1-24, the MMPA paid the checks (proceeds from the sale of milk) to McDonald's members who joined MMPA in the form of an interest-free loan. (Reportedly, 625 joined; the rest of the cooperative's members deciding to sell their milk to Kraft or Michigan Producers Dairy.)

The amount was quite substantial. For Babich, semi-retired, who milks 60 cows with his son Bernard, the loan totaled about \$6,000.

Walsh and a son milk 28-30 cows and their loan totaled about \$4,000.

(The average loan, according to the MMPA, was about \$5,200, with the loans totaling more than \$4.8 million.)

If McDonald's manages to sell its assets by March 15, it will pay MMPA the money that the latter loaned to McDonald's members.

If the defunct cooperative doesn't, the MMPA will take the money out of the new members' milk checks over a 15-month period. Once McDonald's does liquidate, it is supposed to reimburse its old members for the loan they got from the MMPA.

BUT WILL McDONALD'S be able to repay the loan to its ex-members?

Walsh is confident it will. "I feel certain farmers will get 100 percent on the money they've got coming."

Others had doubts, however, that McDonald's assets, once sold, will be enough to pay all its debts. "I don't think we'll get it all," was Babich's comment.

Those contacted by the Chronicle agreed the major

reason McDonald's got into financial troubles was its purchase several years ago of a dairy in Detroit for \$3½ million. It flopped, which cost McDonald's \$4 million more to close it down, according to Leland Wendorf of Lamotte township, McDonald's district director for southern Sanilac county.

Closing its Bay City dairy cost it \$1 million. High labor and energy costs were also crippling factors.

IN ADDITION TO THE loan money, there are also the stock certificates, which everyone concedes is money lost forever.

Twenty percent of McDonald's profits each year were divided among the members in cash. The rest went into shares of stock, which paid 5 percent interest per year. The longer the member belonged, the more shares of stock he owned.

That program came to an end about four years ago when there were no longer enough profits to divide among members.

Wendorf had only been a member six or seven years, so most of that period didn't receive any stock or dividends. He hasn't added up the value of his stock certificates yet, but figures his loss will be under \$1,000.

But for Lewis Babich, who belonged more than 15 years, his stock certificates were worth about \$10,000. The loss won't put him and

his son out of business, he said, but obviously was money that would have been useful.

MEMBERS WERE GENERALLY critical of their not learning about the cooperative's financial predicament until late in the game.

Wendorf had sat on the McDonald's board since April and said the problems weren't obvious until fall. "There was stuff the directors didn't know that management didn't tell us."

Walsh said rumors about the troubles started in the summer, but everything didn't come out in the open until the Nov. 24 meeting in Lansing. Until then, "They always said everything was great and I went along with it."

Walsh strongly disagreed. Farmers were told at the annual and later, district meetings, of the co-op's profits and losses each year, thus they knew that for the last few years, it didn't make a profit. There were adequate reserves then to make up for the loss.

McDonald's problems, such as the Detroit dairy fiasco, he continued, were the fault of the old management, not those in charge at the time of the collapse.

The new management could have made a go of it, he felt, had interest rates not risen so high that it was prohibitive to borrow money to modernize the Flint dairy plant.

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Ambulance service healthy in 1st year

One year after the Cass City Area Ambulance Service (CCAAS) began operation, "It's going as well as was expected," according to Jack McDaniel, operator of the service.

The chairman of the four-township ambulance board that oversees its operation, Elkland Township Supervisor Jack Gallagher, said the board is satisfied with its operation.

The ambulance serves Elkland, Novesta, Evergreen and Greenleaf townships, each of which contributed the equivalent of \$2.75 per township resident in 1979 to subsidize the service. That totaled \$15,220.

The ambulance board is anticipating that they may be able to reduce the subsidy this year to \$2.25. (In addition to Gallagher, also on the board are Lucile Stine, Novesta township; Evergreen Township Treasurer Wayne Whittaker, and Supervisor Gerald Bock or Trustee Ron Fox representing Greenleaf township.)

Other revenue the first year was \$13,551 in collections from individuals or insurance companies, \$20,888 from the operators of the ambulance service and \$1,082 in donations. The donations were used to buy certain equipment.

The \$20,888 comes from McDaniel and his partner in the ambulance service, Wallace (Tim) Grassmann, part of which was a bank loan. That money helped pay for the ambulance, total cost of which was \$26,546. That plus equipment came to a total of \$30,000.

The townships paid the difference between the \$20,000 and \$30,000, plus are repaying the owners of the ambulance service for the money they invested.

The other first-year expense, \$20,741, was for wages, insurance, taxes, gas and oil and disposable supplies, such as bandages and splints.

McDaniel is in charge of the service, while his wife, Ann, does the bookwork. That takes him about six hours per week and her, 6-10. Grassmann handles all the government paperwork, including taxes, but otherwise

isn't involved with operation of the service.

The CCAAS -- the above named individuals -- receive 25 percent of the collections they take in. They view it as public service, not a money-making venture.

As mentioned, the collection rate is about 66 percent, which came to \$13,551 in 1979.

THAT FIGURE CANNOT be improved on much, McDaniel explained, adding that "the majority of people are very good" about paying.

Medicare (federally funded health care for senior citizens) only pays 80 percent of a set amount for ambulance runs. The recipient of the service is supposed to pay the remaining 20 percent, but even if he or she does, the amount still does not cover the true cost of the service.

Medicaid (health care for the poor) only pays a set amount per ambulance run, less than the actual cost, and the CCAAS can't bill the person for the remainder.

Some private health insurance companies do not pay for ambulance service and others pay only a limited amount. Some persons, of course, don't have any health insurance.

The ambulance fee, unchanged this year from 1979, is \$50 per person loading fee plus \$1.50 per loaded mile for those living within the four townships which subsidize the service.

Those living outside the area pay \$100 plus \$2 per loaded mile. They can pay a subscription fee of \$20 and then pay the same fee as those inside the subsidized area. So far, no one has chosen to subscribe.

Even if a person owes money, if he or she needs the ambulance again, they get it. "We don't refuse service to anyone," McDaniel said.

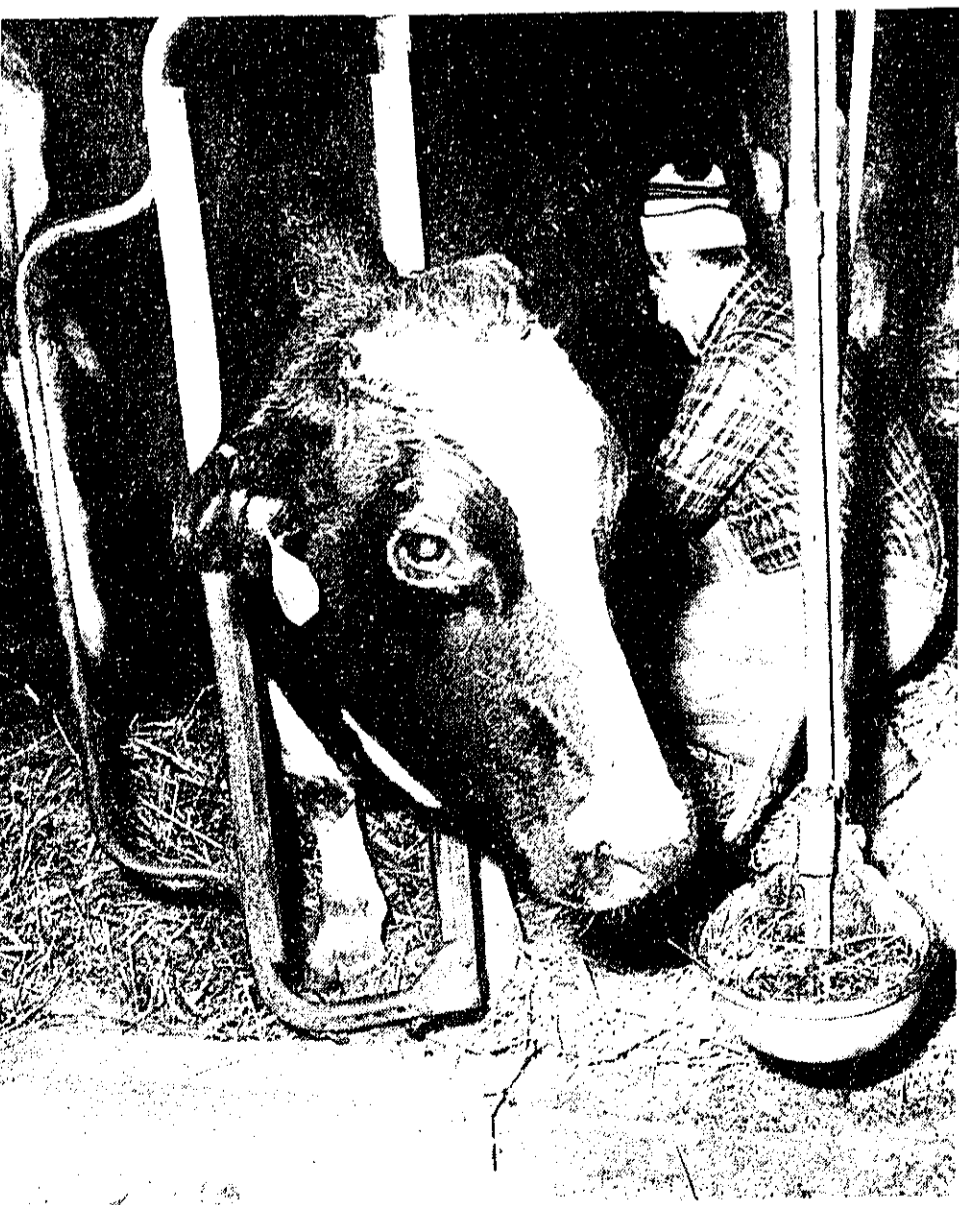
A TOTAL OF 314 RUNS were made last year (versus a projected 250), which worked out to about 10,000 miles on the ambulance. Average life expectancy of such a vehicle is 4-5 years.

Of the 314 runs, 46 were considered of a non-emerg-

ency nature, such as transfer of a patient from Hills and Dales General Hospital to Provincial House for long-term recuperation. A total of 134 calls involved transfers between the two. (The ambulance isn't always called for such transfers, only if it's an emergency or the patient must remain immobilized.)

Of the remaining calls, probably 75 percent were house calls, as opposed to traffic accidents.

Continuation plus photos on page 18.



MILKING TIME -- Bernard Babich at work. The stanchion milking system is used, with the cows standing still and the milking machines being moved from stall to stall. He and his father, Lewis, had about \$10,000 in stock in McDonald's Cooperative Dairy, which is now worthless.