



STANDING BY -- Firemen could only stand by and watch as the north wall of the barn rented by William Hacker came tumbling down Tuesday evening. Six thousand bales of hay and straw were lost, although some bales were pulled out in time from a lean-to at the south end. (Other photos, page 20.)

Firemen fight Tuesday blaze for seven hours

An electrical fault is blamed as the probable cause of a fire that destroyed a barn on Krapf Road Tuesday.

Elkland township firemen, who were at the scene almost seven hours, were assisted by fire fighters from four other departments, with firemen from Elmwood-Gagetown there for five hours.

The barn, 1/4 mile south of 481, east of Cass City, belonged to Diedrich Baumgart of Drayton Plains.

It was rented to William Hacker of Greenland Road, according to his son, John. There were about 4,000 bales of straw and 2,000 of hay stored inside, worth \$1 each. Firemen estimated the old

wood barn, about 40-by-70 feet in size, was worth \$10,000, but would be much costlier than that to replace.

The call to the fire department was made about 4:45 p.m.

The fire was discovered by Steve Smith, 14, who lives next door, and called in by his father, Donald Boyce. The youth said he saw smoke and then flames, and that there was no one in or close by the barn at the time.

Elkland Assistant Fire Chief Jerome Root Jr. said electrical wires led to the north wall and then to the lower level, where the fire started, thus an electrical fault is believed to have been the cause.

The fire went up the wall

between the bales and the wall, which made it hard to reach. The bales on that end were stacked to the roof.

When firemen arrived, he said, "We thought we had a good chance of saving it." The problem was that they couldn't get to the source, partly because the inside of the barn got too smoky, plus there was the danger, if the floor was burning under the hay and straw, that it could collapse.

The north end wall fell at 6:45 p.m. The rest of the structure collapsed about 9.

Firemen repeatedly hosed down two close-by small buildings to keep them from burning. Little or no wind aided their efforts in keeping the blaze contained.

The second department to arrive was Elmwood-Gagetown, which got there about 5:15 and left five hours later.

Other departments there with tankers or trucks were Lamotte township, Caro and Moore township.

At 10 p.m., Elkland Fire Chief Jack Hartwick estimated 40,000-50,000 gallons of water had been used in fighting the blaze. Possibly 3,000 more were used by the time firemen left at 11:45, after the flames were safely confined within the cement basement.

Once back at the station, they had to clean their hoses and put them back on the trucks, so didn't get home until after 1.

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Decker man dies Sunday when car slams into tree

Robert Roy Clark of Deck became Tuscola county's 11th traffic victim of the year Sunday when he lost his life in an accident in Novesta

township.

Sheriff's deputies reported that Clark, 42, of 3973 Van Dyke Road, was eastbound on Shabbona Road, east of

Cemetery Road, when his car went off the north side of the road and slammed head-on into a tree.

He died in the ambulance while being transported to Hills and Dales General Hospital, according to the medical examiner's report. The accident took place at 6:20 p.m.

Investigating officers could find no holes in or objects on the gravel roadway that would have thrown his car out of control and no indication that he had applied his brakes.

Clark did not have his seat belt fastened.

He was born Sept. 27, 1938, in Detroit, the son of Mrs. Antonia Lupiec and the late Gilbert Clark.

Clark married Valeria D'Amour April 8, 1960, in Detroit. Following their marriage, they made their

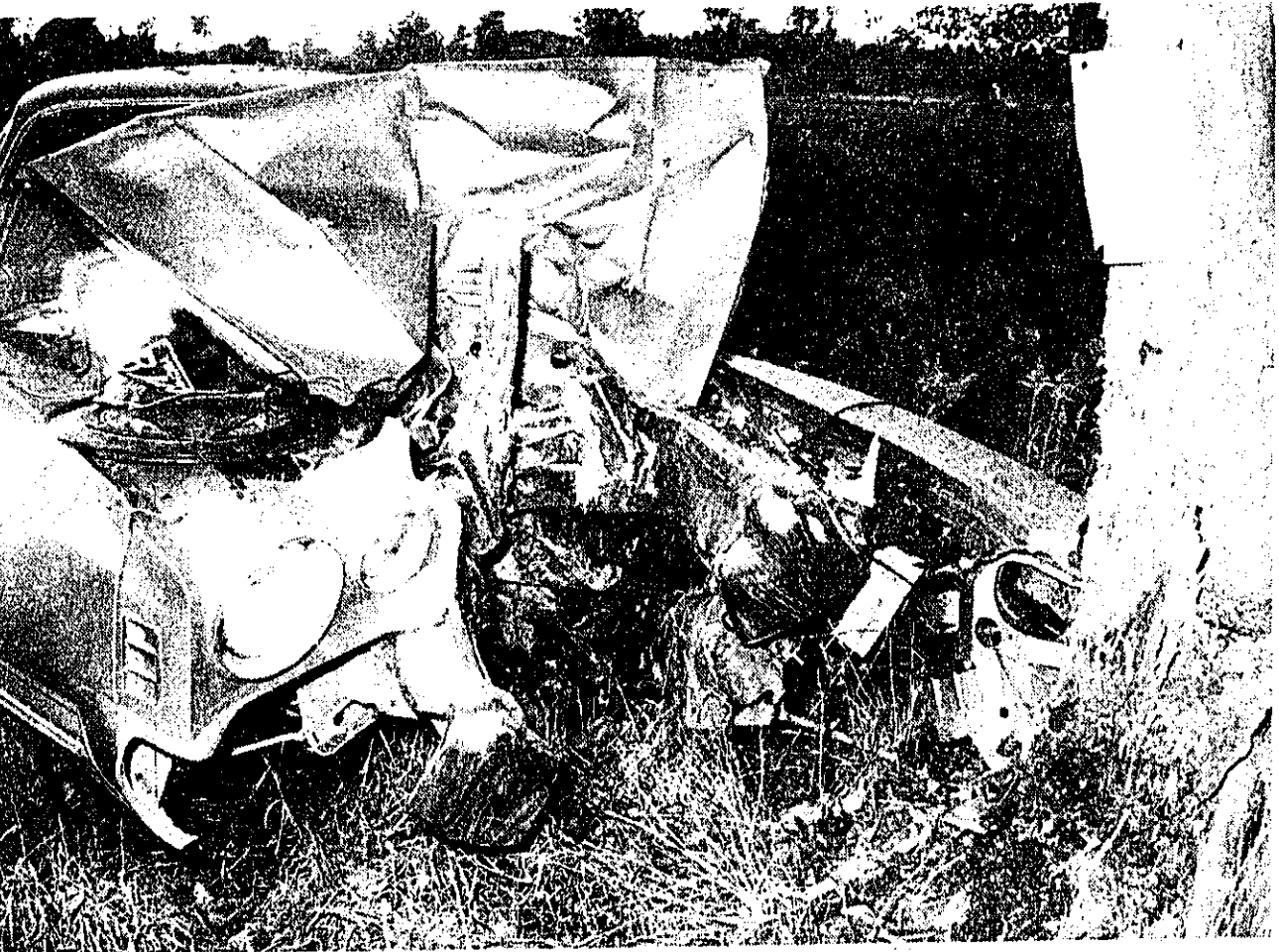
home in Warren. They came to Decker in 1974.

Clark served with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He was a member of St. Pancratius Catholic church of Cass City.

He is survived by his wife; three sons, P-O 3C Charles Clark, U.S. Navy, Waukegan, Ill.; Robert Clark and Philip Clark, both at home; two daughters, Constance Clark and Josephine Clark, both at home; his mother, Mrs. Antonia Lupiec of Warren; one sister, Mrs. Daniel McMaster of Warren, and two brothers, Samuel Clark and Daniel Clark, both of Warren.

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RUMMAGE SALE
Saturday, Oct. 4, at Presbyterian church basement. Doors open 9 a.m. 9-18-3



FATAL CRASH -- The impact wrapped the front end of the car of Robert Clark around the tree it hit before bouncing off. Clark died while being taken to the hospital following the Sunday evening accident.

Enrollment plunge in area districts

Enrollment in area school districts has taken a plunge compared to last year, according to enrollment counts taken Friday.

Student counts on the fourth Friday in September are mandated statewide, with state aid being based on those figures.

The number of students in Cass City schools declined from 2,037 to 1,975, a loss of 62.

Enrollment at Owendale-Gagetown dropped from 461 to 431; Kingston, from 836 to 817, and Ubyly, from 1,243 down to 1,208.

Other Tuscola county districts also lost students.

Except for Owendale-Gagetown, which has too high a property valuation per pupil to qualify, the loss of students will mean a sharp loss in state aid.

Cass City Supt. Donald Crouse made a "wild guess" that the enrollment decline may cost the district \$45,000-50,000 in state school aid.

In making revenue estimates in order to recommend to the school board what millage levies to place on the ballot, he anticipated the district would lose 29 students. The actual loss was more than twice that.

At this point, he indicated, once state revenues are finally known, all he can do is plan the budget carefully "and do the best job we can."

School superintendents don't know how much money they will get from Lansing for the 1980-81 school year because the legislature hasn't approved a school aid bill for the new fiscal year, which started Wednesday.

Normally, the bill would have been passed a couple of months ago.

Because of ever changing and ever declining state tax revenues, plus election year reluctance to do anything that might upset voters, leaders in the House of Representatives chose to approve a short-term interim budget. As of Tuesday, it was still being prepared.

Adding to the budgetary woes is that the state aid payment normally received by schools Oct. 1 is being delayed possibly 10-15 days because the state doesn't have enough money at present.

When it is received, it will only be 93 percent of what it should be.

Because of the delay, Crouse said, the district will

have to borrow money from a bank to get by until the money comes in. As of Monday, he was shopping for the lowest interest rate.

Enrollment at each building (1979 figures in parentheses) is: High School, 674 (681); intermediate, 557 (577); Campbell Elementary, 468 (507); Deford, 134 (144), and Evergreen, 142 (128).

The reason for the fewer students, school officials contacted agreed, was fewer babies being born. Crouse pointed out that districts throughout Michigan are anticipating enrollment declines this year, as lower birth rates are being reflected in the school population.

Another factor, but not easily measurable, is families moving out of local school districts.

isn't based on total enrollment.

The big reason for the decline, Supt. Ronald Erickson said, was that there weren't as many kindergartners starting school this year as there were seniors who graduated last year.

The high school (grades 7-12) counted 214 students, down 32 from last year, and elementary, 217, two more than last year.

KINGSTON

The 817 students counted Friday were 19 fewer than a year ago.

The elementary grades (K-6) increased in enrollment from 413 to 419, but the high school lost 25 students, from 423 down to 398.

Supt. Robert Cameron couldn't be reached for comment.

OWEN-GAGE

Since the district doesn't qualify for general state aid, the decline in number of students won't hurt revenue.

The district does receive some categorical state aid, such as for driver education and transportation, but that

UBLY

The Ubyly district had 1,243 students last year and has 1,208 this year.

Most of the loss, according to Business Manager Mark Tenbusch, was at the junior high and in the freshman class.

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Tennis court grant accepted Police may join union; apartment hearing set

Cass City's four full-time policemen are seeking to be represented by the Fraternal Order of Police, the village council was informed Monday evening.

The council also scheduled a public hearing Oct. 27 on a change in the village ordinance in order to allow new apartments in old downtown buildings.

In a Sept. 16 letter to Village President Lambert Althaver, E. Ray Harwood, field representative for the FOP state lodge labor council, said the four officers have signed show-of-interest cards indicating a desire to be represented by the FOP "in bargaining for wages, hours of work and other terms and conditions of employment."

The village police force consists of the four and Police Chief Gene Wilson.

Harwood's letter was turned over to the village's attorney, Clinton House, who wrote back, "If some village police officers do wish to be represented by your organization, then I suggest that you or they follow the statutory petition procedures.

What that means, House explained to the Chronicle Tuesday, was that the union should petition the Michigan Employment Relations Commission to conduct an election by secret ballot.

The officers could then vote on whether they wanted to be represented by the FOP "without anyone looking over their shoulder."

All village employees presently are not unionized.

APARTMENTS

Present village zoning ordinance prohibits rental of apartments in downtown buildings once they have been vacant six months. Conversion of vacant space into apartments is also prohibited, all being considered a non-conforming use.

At the request of the council to review the ordinance, the planning commission is recommending it be changed to allow living quarters in existing buildings downtown, provided they comply with building code requirements and that they are not on the first floor.

The council scheduled a

public hearing on the proposal at 7 p.m. Oct. 27. The meeting may be held in the Elkland township fire hall.

Reservations were expressed about some of the suggested changes, such as whether all first floor apartments should be barred.

Suggestions can be made at the hearing.

TENNIS COURTS

The council voted to accept the federal grant of \$30,800 for new tennis courts.

Application for the grant had been made on the premise the courts would cost \$61,600, with the village paying the remainder.

The new estimate, however, is the cost will be \$63,500.

The only way for the village to get more federal funds, it has been informed, would be to reapply, which could delay the entire project.

Thus the village will pay the entire amount beyond the \$30,800, with contributions being solicited to defray its share. The Rotary Club is interested in spearheading a drive to raise

contributions, it was reported.

The courts have to be done by the end of 1981. If next year the council decides it cannot afford the project, for instance, should the Tisch Amendment be approved in November, it can reject the federal grant.

Althaver estimated Tisch could reduce village property tax revenues by 60 percent, plus there would be additional cutbacks in state revenue to Cass City.

OTHER ITEMS

The request of Ron Nicholas of 4721 S. Seeger Street for granting of an easement to 3 acres he owns off Hillcrest Drive was denied because the property is accessible via his driveway off Seeger.

The annexation request of Richard Biddinger, owner of Engineered Tools, Inc., was accepted and forwarded to the county Board of Commissioners for its required approval.

The property on the west side of Doerr Road is 165-by-

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Moonlight Madness
In Cass City
Thursday
See Pages 8-9-10-11