

Leland Student Fall May Involve Building Problem

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

The fall in a Leland Middle School hallway last week by 11-year-old Andy Hewett may have been caused by more than a simple climb onto water fountains, contends his mother, Mrs. Kenneth Hewett of Leland.

The morning of May 24, the boy, excused from class by his teacher, David Mapson, to get a drink of water, was found lying in the hall near the water fountains. He was reportedly conscious and could walk to the office, guided by a teacher who was summoned by the student who found him. The Leland Rescue Squad was called and Andy was finally moved to New Hanover Regional Medical Center, where he was admitted to intensive care, then transferred out of it the next day.

Mrs. Hewett said Friday there is more to the story. Andy was home from the hospital, having suffered a

crack in the cervical spine and a fractured skull, she said, and had given them details of the incident.

"Andy and another little boy were in the hall together," she related. "They found some ceiling tiles missing above the water fountain and Luther climbed up to explore the hole in the ceiling. Both of them climbed from a small water fountain to a higher one, and when Andy tried to get into the hole, he lost his balance and hit his head on the floor."

The other boy, she said, had either already jumped to the floor or did so at that point. "Andy was unconscious when Mr. Mapson got him up from the floor," Mrs. Hewett went on, "and took him to the office. When he got to the office, he began throwing up. He was kind of in and out and kept telling Mr. Mapson, 'I want my Daddy.' An office worker slapped him in the face to

wake him up completely. All this happened between 11:15 and 11:30 a.m."

The rescue squad was called at 12:30 p.m., according to Mrs. Hewett. "Mr. Mapson told them to call the squad when he first walked in the office," Mrs. Hewett said. "You couldn't ask for anyone to be more concerned than he was, but they put off calling and when it finally got there, Jane Erwin, the EMT, was really upset. She had been told to go in back of the school with lights off, even though the front entrance of the school is closest to the office."

She also quoted Erwin as saying that the boy shouldn't have been moved by untrained personnel.

At the medical center, Andy began having convulsions, his mother said.

Meanwhile, his father was notified at work about 2:45 p.m.

"This was done by our nephew, who heard about Andy through the grapevine and called my husband. He beat the ambulance to the hospital."

The boy is now ordered to rest at home for six weeks to eight weeks, with limited activity, she said.

"He's a very curious, active little boy, a real busy-body," Mrs. Hewett said. "I understand what Andy did was wrong, but having missing tiles in the ceiling was an open invitation to kids."

"I'm going to talk to an attorney and want to be sure we get better medical support in the schools."

Repeated efforts to contact Leland Middle School Principal Christine Hall were unsuccessful and Assistant Principal Robert Rhyme said only that he was not aware of missing ceiling tiles in that particular location, and he would investigate.

Emergency Plans Tested Tuesday In Brunswick Nuclear Plant "Alert"

At 9:21 Tuesday morning, Carolina Power and Light Inc. notified Brunswick County officials that an "unusual event" had occurred near its nuclear power plant outside Southport.

At 9:58 a.m. a second facsimile transmission from the plant reported that an earthquake in Wilmington had caused "minor fuel damage" to its Unit 1 reactor, forcing a shutdown.

Fifteen minutes later CP&L notified Brunswick County that a coolant leak had resulted in "a complete loss of ability to maintain the plant in a cold shutdown." An emergency alert was issued, warning that conditions at the plant were degrading.

Throughout the day more than 200 county, state, and federal emergency management personnel responded to radiation releases, alerted shelters, dispatched law enforcement officers, set up roadblocks and

directed the evacuation of residents in response to Brunswick County's worst nightmare.

Fortunately, this was only a test. But a realistic one, putting regional emergency response plans across the region on full alert in an evaluation of their ability to react to a rapidly unfolding, large-scale calamity.

The exercise is required every two years by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Using a scenario known only to themselves, test organizers regularly issued realistic bulletins of changing conditions at the plant. Emergency officials were forced to respond as they would in an actual alert.

A later dispatch Tuesday reported that one victim had been contaminated by radiation. Another at 11:40 a.m. said a second seismic event had shaken the plant. At 1:05 p.m. a

buildup of hydrogen gas in the containment area reportedly forced evacuation of all personnel up N.C. 211.

As each new event was reported, different aspects of the emergency operations plan were tested.

Nearly all Brunswick County departments participated in the drill, as did New Hanover County, FEMA, the N.C. Division of Emergency Management N.C. Highway Patrol, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army National Guard and the Sunny Point Military Operations Terminal.

At the height of the alert there were about 70 people secured in the county's emergency operation center taking part in the drill or evaluating the reaction to it. Sheriff's deputies guarded the doors, allowing public entry only as far as the reception area.

Inside, computer maps appeared

on a large screen charting the latest information from the plant and highlighting what areas might need to be evacuated. As the "emergency" worsened, calls were made to evacuate schools. Police were dispatched to control traffic. A rescue squad was sent to transport a "patient" to a contamination unit at Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport.

County Manager David Clegg felt the exercise "went really well" and was pleased with the county's response. He said state-of-the-art communications equipment at the emergency operation's center kept Brunswick well ahead of other participants in the drill.

There will be a formal critique of the drill by officials from Brunswick and New Hanover counties, the state and CP&L at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, June 4, at the EOC building at the county complex in Bolivia. The public is invited to attend.

Study Shows One In Four County Students Holds Job

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Ask teen-agers in any Brunswick County high school if their after-school job adversely affects grades or school work and some will deny it.

Most teachers, on the other hand, have had experiences to the contrary.

One thing everyone acknowledges is the prevalence of the working student. Often, family finances demand the extra income; more often, teenagers want independence or the ability to purchase that first car.

A recent study conducted by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction shows that 25 percent of North Carolina high school students work and the same percentage holds true for Brunswick County, according to Kay Williams, one of the consultants conducting the study.

"The General Assembly passed legislation last year mandating this study so they could find out more about student achievement and the factors that affect it," she said.

Local results indicate 590 Brunswick County high school students hold down jobs, including those obtained with the help of vocational programs and Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs.

"The school system informed us through the questionnaire that it does have guidelines with the business community as to working conditions for these students," she said. "In Brunswick County 100 businesses told us they provide release time for their working students to attend parent-teacher conferences."

William Furpless, director of vocational education, said his department includes a variety of programs that assist in placing students in jobs appropriate to their classroom work.

"This on-the-job training exists in marketing education, home economics, business and office, and industrial cooperative training," he said. "In a properly run co-op program there shouldn't be a problem for kids and their school work."

A written arrangement with employers requires them to be in school regularly and they are closely supervised and trained under program guidelines, he pointed out.

The JTPA program, under the jurisdiction of Dropout Prevention Specialist Wendy Milligan, targets potential dropouts, single parents and juvenile offenders.

"We try to break the cycle of poverty," Mrs. Milligan said, "so we find employers for on-the-job training."

She said the YWCA, Employment Security Commission and Try-Out program helps place students in jobs, with the salaries funded by JTPA.

A 1988 study of dropouts in the state's public schools, indicated that half those leaving school said their job interfered with classes. The state Department of Public Instruction has estimated that nearly half the 20,000 high-school students who dropped

out last year had found that to be true.

Percy Hewett and Felishia Hill are West Brunswick students who each work about 20 hours a week, Hewett for a grocery store chain and Hill as busgirl at a local restaurant. They said emphatically that their jobs don't interfere with homework or their sleep.

South Brunswick High School (SBHS) senior David Short had a different story. "I've worked this year as a cook and busboy at Sandpiper Restaurant," he said, "and have to stay pretty late at work. I know I'd have made better grades if I hadn't been working. I was just too tired after work to study and I'd daydream in class."

Another SBHS worker-student, Kenneth Moore, said his job at McDonald's brought his grades down at first.

"Then I got more serious about schoolwork and brought them up," he added.

SBHS industrial education coordinator Rita Hargrove told of an honor student who works two jobs at the mall, "to buy a car," and said the young woman managed to keep up her honors status.

Linda Callender, a West Brun-

wick English teacher, said she has had working students in her classes who fell asleep in class because of late working hours.

"It's particularly bad when they work at grocery stores, where they have to stay late stocking the shelves after the store closes," she said.

A final word of wisdom came from Moore, who said, "A serious student wouldn't let work make a difference."

Legislation currently in a Senate committee in the General Assembly, prohibits students with a D or F average from working more than 40

hours a week.

An article in the June 1990 issue of *Teacher Magazine*, "The Lure of the Paycheck," casts a different perspective on those activities that distract teenagers from learning. It quotes a researcher on working teens as arguing that "jobs are too often the only thing teachers blame when they see a drop in grades. How do we know the same doesn't apply to extra-curricular activities?" School athletics was mentioned specifically as a common cause of fatigue in class and difficulty with academic success.

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