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Thursday, Feb. 17, 1994

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Picketers accuse police, guards of harassment

Some striking workers at the Hoopeston Pillsbury plant are leveling charges of harassment against the Hoopeston police department.

"Our local police are threatening us now," said one worker, who asked to remain unidentified. The worker alleges that Officer Chuck Moyer threatened to arrest all strikers "if somebody doesn't come and 'fess up" to vandalizing a semi truck radiator.

Police have received two reports of damaged radiators. Both were reported Tuesday afternoon after track drivers found their radiators pierced with a pointed metal rod approximately ½-inch in diameter.

The worker said police are watching strikers with binoculars and are following strikers "even if we just leave to get a can of pop." Also, he said, Chief Orval Kaag threatened to have legally parked cars towed from First Ave. and Penn St.

Police have a different take on the situation. "I said if somebody didn't confess, I would seek le-

gal advice on how to handle the situation, which could include arresting everybody," Moyer said.

As for allegations of using binoculars and following strikers when they leave, Chief Orval Kaag said the department is watching strikers. "If one of them uses binoculars, that's their business," he said, adding police scrutiny came after reports of flattened tires, damaged truck radiators and one report of gas to the plant being shut off.

As for the parked cars, Kaag admitted they were legally parked, but were "causing problems at that time" by interfering with semistrying to enter and leave the loading area. "They were intentionally parked there to block him," Kaag said.

Three strikers met Tuesday with police and city attorney Calvin Hultquist. "It wasn't a meeting to warn them," Hultquist said. "I did warn them, but that wasn't the purpose of the meeting."

Hultquist said strikers requested information on their rights and limits while picketing. "All I did See "STRIKERS" on other side

Drug Busters explain program at CIC meeting

Leaders in Hoopeston learned Monday what students are doing to fight drug use in local schools.

Five members of Flint's Drug Busters attended Monday's Community Involvement Committee meeting.

The five were John Klaber, group president; Heather Pratt, vice president; Ashley White, treasurer, Jessica Kelnhoffer, secretary; and David Jeffers, activities director.

Students told those attending that the group was

formed several years ago after students talked about drug use in the community. Today, 85 students are involved in the program.

Drug Busters warns students of the dangers of drug use and educates them on the types of drugs available. "We talked to Officer (Danny) Danner, and he told us about what type of drugs are being used in Hoopeston," Klaber said, adding marijuana and cocaine are available.

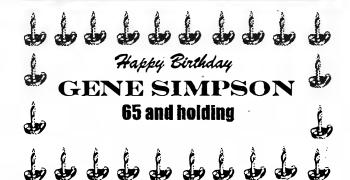
See "CIC" on other side

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CIC continued from other side_____

The group also promotes non-drug related activities. Kelnhofer said four activities are scheduled throughout the year, including skating, pizza and bowling parties and a lock-in at John Greer Grade School.

The activities, while fun, are also educational. For example, at the lock-in, emergency medical technicians from the Hoopeston Ambulance Service told students about emergency situations they had responded to.

At the lock-in, students also create anti-drug posters, which are then displayed throughout the community.

Activities are funded through concessions sales at sports events, as well as the Sweet Corn Festival.

The students recognized McDonald's in Hoopeston, the former telephone company, ALLTEL, and Tom Osborne for providing support, meals and awards.

Judge reverses ruling on evidence in Catron sex case

Two pieces of evidence previously admitted in the Dennis Catron sex abuse trial have been thrown out.

Circuit judge Rita Garman reversed an earlier ruling she made allowing pornographic magaizes and playing cards to be used as evidence against Catron.

However, the now-16-year-old testified, Catron did show him a pornographic videotape of a couple both of them knew.

Strikers continued from other side

was basically tell them that it was within their First Amendment rights to demonstrate and picket, within limits, and they shouldn't exceed those limits," he said.

The striker also alleges security guards hired by Pillsbury are harassing picketers and said police did cooperate by speaking with the guard.

The striker said the guard left Pillsbury property and came into the street hoping "one of us would clock him. But we didn't. We know what they're up to."

Hultquist said the guards are to escort trucks in and out of the plant and watch over the premises. "They're not police," Hultquist said. "Basically, their authority ends where Pillsbury's property ends."

Teamsters began the strike Sunday.

In related action, Garman allowed as evidence a list of alleged contact with the victim and other people. She reserved ruling on a request for a change of venue.

Jury selection in Catron's trial will begin Feb. 22, even if he is not present. Catron has been a fugitive for more than a year. Authorities believe he may be in Bangkok, Thailand

In the hospital

Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital Feb. 15, 1994

Admitted: Dawn Lawson, Hoopeston; Michael Markley, Wellington.

Discharged: none.

Police News

Jesse Lynn Webster, 17, rural Rankin, was arrested at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, charged with burglary. Webster was arrested after he allegedly broke into a house at 405 E. Young.

Two juveniles, 15 and 16, were also involved, but had not been charged by press time.

Weather

Sunny and warm today. High 55-60. Tonight, clear. Low in the mid to upper 30s. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High near 58, low near 41.

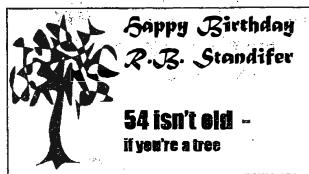
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