

2 Boys Killed, Rescuer Injured In Mine Shaft

By **REGIS M. STEFANIK**

Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Two Pleasant Hills teen-agers died yesterday after they climbed into a 30-foot mine shaft in Jefferson Memorial Park.

Pleasant Hills policeman Albert Breisinger, 23, who tried to help the boys out of the mine is in critical condition in Jefferson Medical Center.

The coroner's office identified the victims as Kenneth Long, 14, of 518 Arbor Lane, and Bradford Reed, 16, of 523 Arbor Lane.

Whether the victims suffered from inhaling toxic gas in the shaft or from lack of oxygen has not been determined.

A team of toxicologists was on the scene. The coroner's office will perform an autopsy today.

The two boys had climbed into the mine shaft, which is on the bottom edge of the cemetery, as part of an initiation ritual in a club police said was probably started "for something to do."

Pleasant Hills Police Sgt. Eric Judd said the mine shaft was not covered and appeared to be unused.

Long, Reed and three other boys, also in their early teens, went to the mine

(Continued on Page 2, Column 5)



BRADFORD REED



KENNETH LONG

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(Continued from Page 1)

shaft and Reed attempted to climb in with a rope, changed his mind and climbed out.

Long then went into the mine and when his companions called to him, he was slumped over. The boys thought he was faking and started to walk away. When Long still failed to respond to their calls, Reed went back into the shaft and he too slumped over, started gagging and passed out.

The three remaining boys ran to get help and returned with Breisinger who went into the shaft "and looked like he was drowning," according to one of the boys.

Patrolman Joseph Kenney got to the scene shortly after Breisinger and called the Pleasant Hills Volunteer Fire Department and the rescue crew which brought Breisinger and the two boys out

of the shaft.

Long died in Jefferson Medical Center at 4:40 p.m. and Reed died in St. Clair Memorial Hospital at 5:35 p.m. Judd said the first call for help came at 3:30 p.m.

Three other Pleasant Hills firemen, Ernest Petruzzi, 28, George Bonura, 23, and Michael Strauch, 26, were treated for inhalation of an unknown gas at Jefferson Medical Center and released.

Police declined to identify the three boys who went to the mine shaft with the two victims.

According to Pleasant Hills Fire Chief Leslie Thompson, members of the rescue squad couldn't tell if there was a gas in the shaft.

He said the smell in the shaft wasn't strong. The rescue crew wore oxygen masks but some crew members removed their masks to smell what was in the shaft.