

Stratford History - No Foolin'

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Sometimes the newspaper stories of times past raise more questions than answers. For example, how does a vault door with no automatic closer on it shut itself? How does the vault door lock itself when there is no way to lock the door from the inside of the vault? How is it that no one knows, for certain, what the combination is to the town vault?

It seems fairly apparent that what started as a fun April Fools' Day prank at Town Hall, "went south" fairly quickly when no one knew for certain what the vault combination was. Poor Charlie Buynovsky must have had some anxious moments, himself, as he waited for the vault door to be opened. We can't help but wonder who the culprit was who locked Charlie in the vault. We're hopeful that the vault combination is securely stored somewhere in Town Hall today. Happy April Fools Day!

Sunday Herald
April 4, 1954
**Finance Chief Here In
Stratford Crisis**

Stratford town officials saw red late this week when one of the town's engineers was locked in the Engineering Dept. vault for 20 minutes and no one knew the combination.

There were several willing Jimmy Valentines but only one, Finance Dir. Allen Vermilya, had the right touch.

Charlie Buynovsky walked sheepishly out of the walk-in vault. He couldn't account for his predicament.

It turned out to be funny, especially on April's Fool Day, but it could have been tragic, officials agreed.

The would-be safe crackers tried every vault combination in the Town Hall, and even the right one several times but could get no results.

Buynovsky shouted a combination from behind the steel door, but even that was wrong, too. Two other workers in the department, who knew the combination, were out. No one knew where.

Town Mgr. Harry Flood, Planning Dir. Thomas Draper and Building Insp. Harry Spear watched anxiously as clerks attempted to hit the right combination.

Vermilya heard about the commotion, took two cracks at the vault and Buynovsky was freed.

There is a very sad postscript to this story. Building Inspector Harry Spear, who "watched anxiously as clerks attempted to hit the right combination," was killed in an automobile accident in Milford on May 29th, 1954. He was returning from picking up his son, Donald, in New London. Donald had been aboard the aircraft carrier Bennington when an explosion caused a fire which killed 103 sailors.



Town vault in which Charlie Bunovsky was "April Fooled" in 1954. The interior door has no locking apparatus on it.