



Car-truck crash kills manager of Kennel Club

By ROD SPAW
and LINDA NEGRO
Courier staff writers

The manager of the Evansville Kennel Club was killed Thursday when the car he was driving collided with a crude oil tanker truck at the intersection of Southlane and Shawnee drives in Evansville.

Charles J. Culver, 59, of Henderson, Ky., was reported dead at the scene. Police said the car, which had just entered the intersection while southbound on Shawnee Drive, struck the tanker just in front of its rear tandem wheels. Police Sgt. Joe Reed said the tanker was west-bound on Southlane.

Driving the truck was Gregory Scott Motley, 20, of Scottsville, Ky., police said. He was not injured.

Police Chief Ray Hamner said Culver was thrown into a ditch on the north side of Southlane after the impact. There were no passengers in the car, according to Hamner.

Culver's body was removed at 5:30 p.m. by the Vanderburgh County coroner's office. Deputy Coroner Earl Cox said Culver died of severe head injuries.

Hamner said there were conflicting statements from Motley and witnesses concerning which vehicle had the green light at the signalized intersection. He said Motley and the witnesses were taken to police headquarters to give formal statements to investigators.

Vanderburgh County Deputy Prosecutor Neil Thomas also was at the scene of the collision. He said it was too early to tell if any charges would be filed.

The tanker truck continued northwest on Southlane for about 200 yards before stopping. Wreckage from the impact was strewn several yards past the intersection.

Police blocked the northwest lanes of Southlane for several hours after the accident. Traffic was diverted as far away as U.S. 41 and Southlane while investigators continued their work at the scene.

Hamner said the tank truck was leaking and police were waiting for another truck to pick up its load of fuel.

See obituary, Page 4



Fatal crash

Police officers inspect the car of Charles Culver, who drove under a tanker truck Thursday at Southlane and Shawnee drives. Culver, 59, of Henderson, Ky., was killed instantly. (Courier photo by Bill Adkins)

Ambulance policy called 'disregard' of public safety

By LINDA NEGRO
Courier staff writer

An Alexander Ambulance official renewed efforts for better ambulance service on the East Side, saying the current service is inadequate and ineffective.

At issue is the city's policy of dispatching downtown ambulances to East Side emergencies, rather than calling for private ambulances already located on the East Side.

Tom Vachett, director of Alexander Ambulance Service, appealed to the Safety Board Thursday to change the policy, claiming the current policy is a "blatant disregard for the health, well-being and safety of its citizens."

Armed with statistics on cardiac arrest patients that needed immediate ambulance service on the East Side in September, Vachett showed that injured people had to wait for a downtown ambulance even though the Alexander ambulance was available nearby.

Board President Philip Siegel took Vachett's appeal under advisement and postponed discussion until a later meeting.

Responding to reporters' questions after the meeting, Fire Chief John Behme admitted that time is lost in reaching the seriously ill or injured when the city ambulance must travel from downtown.

"I'll admit that the (city) ambulances aren't stationed in the best place," he said.

But Behme said he doesn't have the authority to send the Alexander ambulance first. He said the City Council would

have to negotiate a contract with the service.

The city ambulance based at Eighth and Gum streets often passes the Alexander ambulance stationed at 2105 Lincoln Ave. while making runs to the East Side.

The Metropolitan Evansville Emergency Medical Services Council has repeatedly appealed to the Safety Board this year, asking that the closest ambulance be sent.

"It is obvious that the city does not have the best interests of its citizens at heart," Vachett wrote in a letter to Siegel.

"Perhaps if Mayor (Michael) Vandever were to have need for a Paramedic Ambulance at his home at the corner of Alford Boulevard and Bayard Park Drive, and had to wait for a Fire Department Ambulance to arrive... while (the Alexander ambulance) sat four blocks away, then we might see the resolution of this very serious problem," Vachett wrote.

City officials have said repeatedly that it would not be economically feasible to allow the Alexander ambulance to make first response to East Side emergencies.

For years the city has been battling a deficit in the paramedic and ambulance account and Behme said officials have indicated the budget would be "devastated" if the city did not have the revenue from the East Side runs.

Officials believe a countywide ambulance program now in the planning stages will correct the problem. Some reports indicate that program would not be possible before 1985.

Revised riverfront plan includes 4-lane street, walkway

By RICH DAVIS
Courier staff writer

A plan to keep Southlane Drive four lanes but allow a tree-lined walkway and park to be built at Dress Plaza was well-received Thursday. However, local officials are still waiting to hear cost estimates due in three to four weeks.

"There are still a lot of technical questions to be answered, but I think they've come up with a workable idea," Mayor Michael Vandever said following a meeting between downtown master planners and a local steering committee.

He said it appears to answer objections over an earlier proposal that would have reduced the riverfront boulevard to a two-lane local street.

Vandever said the city isn't looking at the project simply in terms of "raw construction dollars" and how the money can be raised. He said planners also have been asked to show the kind of return on its investment the city could expect in terms of new development, jobs and increased tax base.

He said it may be possible to get potential riverfront developers to share part of the costs, such as street landscaping, if the city agrees to the project.

"If you have a nicely developed riverfront, then the value of that land goes up considerably and becomes more attractive to developers for housing, apartments or shops," Vandever added.

The revised plan would extend Southlane Drive over adjacent Riverside Drive, a street that runs parallel and 3 to 6 feet lower than Southlane for six blocks. Riverside, which has two lanes of traffic, would have to be filled in and built up to Southlane's level.

Combining the two streets into a boulevard renamed "Water Street" would provide enough width, about 104 feet, to:

- Have a 20-foot-wide esplanade, or tree-lined walkway, facing the river in the present southbound lane nearest the floodwall.
- Still have two southbound and two northbound lanes of traffic, an attractive median and a 15-foot walk on the downtown side of the boulevard.

Consultants say the idea of raising Southlane a little higher to give motorists a better view of the river also is being considered. Several streets, including Vine, Sycamore, Walnut and the Main Street Walkway, would be ramped slightly to connect with the new boulevard for right turns only.

Just as now, the only left turns that could be made off the new boulevard into downtown would be at Court or Cherry streets.

But consultant Ed Hafer noted much of the traffic from the city's West Side will use either the Division Street expressway or Second Street at Fulton Avenue to get downtown.

Calling the revised plan "a giant step forward," Hafer said the new boulevard could handle 45,000 cars daily, well in excess of the 30,000 or fewer projected in 20 years.

He said while it still needs "additional input and research," it answers fears that access to the city's West Side would be cut off by changes in Southlane or that traffic would be diverted onto neighborhood streets.

The only new traffic light would be at the Walkway, where a signal could be activated by pedestrians crossing to reach the plaza. Vandever said he wants more information on how well such a light would work during peak traffic periods.

According to consultant Eric Ernstberger of Rundell Associates of Muncie, Ind., the suggested park at Dress Plaza would start on the river side of the floodwall and go out about 100 feet, or a little over half way down to the river's edge. Covering the middle section of the plaza, it would "cascade" in tiers to an amphitheater at the bottom. Trees and other items planted would be high enough to be safe from flooding, he added.

He said parking would remain and boat launching would be provided on both ends of the plaza. He said the idea of a cobble pavement, rather than concrete, in the parking and driving areas of Dress Plaza is being considered.

Planners, who have been working with study groups inside the local committee, also gave a "progress report" on ideas for the Walkway between Second and Seventh streets.

The goal is to restore the five-block area in the heart of the city to a turn-of-the-century river theme, with programs and incen-

tives to get storefronts restored to their original facade where possible.

Although consultant David Lewis said the planners are looking at "facade ordinances" in other cities, including Seattle where merchants were required to participate, Vandever said it would be voluntary here. He said it is hoped there would be enough incentives to get owners involved.

To give the Walkway a sense of "place," consultants are suggesting:

- Bricked crosswalks at intersections.
- Erection of portals — or gateway arches similar to the smokestacks of a riverboat — at the Seventh and Second street ends.
- Replacement of contemporary benches and street lights with turn-of-the-century type items. The modernistic ball-type lights, Lewis said, should be put on Fourth Street to give it a boulevard effect leading to the old Coliseum.

Lewis said the downtown needs to learn a lesson from shopping centers, with merchants banding together to form a "downtown management group" that would supplement such city services as Walkway maintenance, cleanup and security, plan downtown events and promotions.

Train crash probes to hold hearing here

By PATRICK W. WATHEN
Courier staff writer

The National Transportation Safety Board will hold a two-day hearing next month in Evansville to see if they can glean additional information from witnesses in the fatal train accident at Sullivan, Ind.

Hubert Jewell, NTSB's investigator in charge of the accident, said the public hearing — called a deposition proceeding by the NTSB — will be Oct. 11 and 12 at Evansville's Ramada Inn.

Two Evansville men, Michael Maurer, 44, and Ed Wesley Stocker, 37, were killed in the Sept. 14 accident.

They were riding in the caboose of a train when it was struck from the rear by a second train.

The engineer of the second train, Jerry R. Smith, 43, of Evansville, and the head brakeman, Billy J. Hudson, 46, also of Evansville, have been charged in Sullivan Circuit Court with reckless homicide.

Blood tests showed that Smith's blood-alcohol level was .27 percent and Hudson's was .04 percent. In Indiana, a person with a blood-alcohol level of .10 percent or higher is considered too drunk to drive a car.

Jewell has said the train operated by Smith and Hudson had pulled onto a siding at Oaktown, Ind., to allow faster trains to pass. While on the siding, Smith fell asleep and Hudson took control of the train, though he had no authority to do so, Jewell said.

After pulling back onto the main line, Hudson also fell asleep and did not wake up until moments before the collision at Sullivan, Jewell said.

At next month's hearing, between 15 and 17 witnesses will offer testimony under oath and before a court reporter, Jewell said.

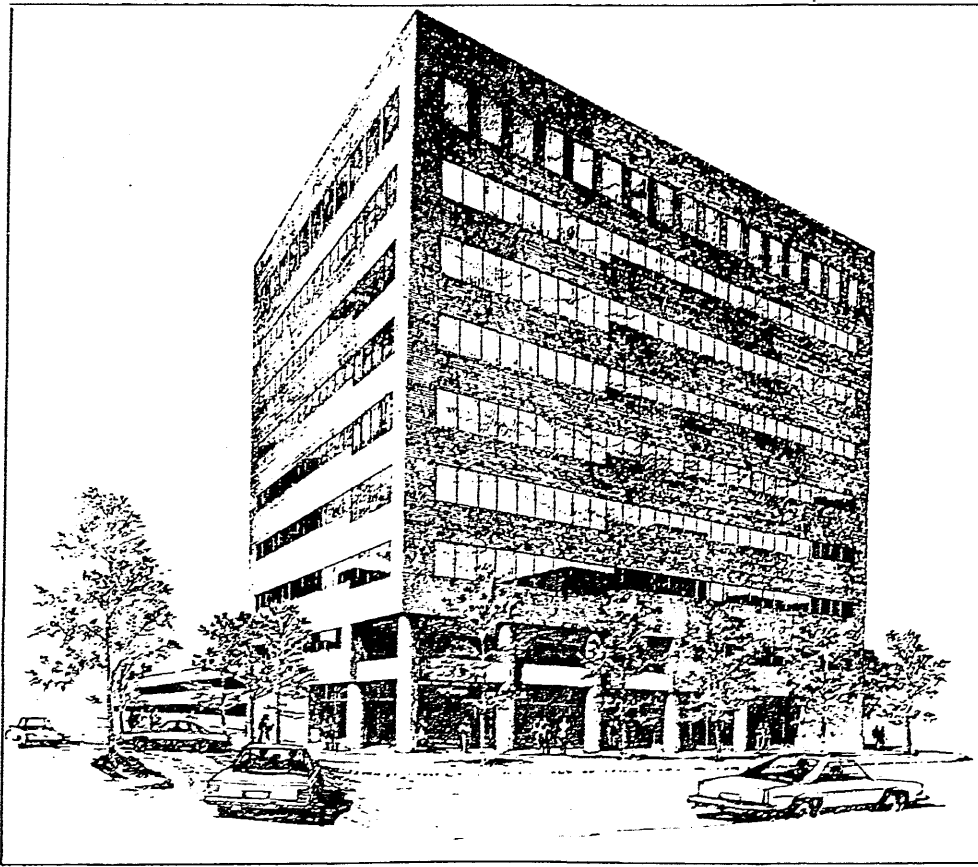
Patricia A. Goldman, vice chairman of the NTSB, will preside over the hearing. Also participating will be Jewell and Harold Storey, chief of the board's Railroad Accident Division.

Jewell said invitations to participate have been sent to the Federal Railroad Administration, Seaboard System railroad, owner of both trains, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the United Transportation Union, which represent Smith and Hudson, respectively.

Each agency or organization will be allowed to designate a spokesman who will question witnesses, Jewell said.

After the hearing, NTSB officials will return to Washington and analyze the information gathered in the probe and at the hearing.

Investigators then will present a report to the board for approval. At a subsequent meeting, the board could issue a probable cause for the accident and offer recommendations, if any, for legislative or regulation changes and safety improvements.



Artist's concept of \$8.1 million downtown building developed by Alan and Charles Braun

Ceremonies mark start of building

The ceremonial first shovel of dirt will be removed this morning from a vacant downtown lot that will soon be the site of an \$8.1 million office building.

Developed by Alan and Charles Braun, the nine-story structure will house the Indiana division of Peabody Coal Co.

Mayor Michael Vandever and several other officials are expected to be on hand at the 10 a.m. groundbreaking ceremonies.

Peabody, the nation's largest coal producer, has agreed to lease three stories of the new building, but the Brauns, who operate Industrial Contractors Inc., are still looking for tenants to occupy the rest of the space.

The building will feature a partially enclosed main entrance and possibly a courtyard near the entryway. Plans also call for a parking deck and surface lot which can accommodate about 300 vehicles.

The construction site is an L-shaped parcel near the intersection of First and Sycamore streets, and the building could be connected to a First Street walkway which has been proposed as part of the downtown master plan.

Financing is coming from \$5.3 million worth of economic development bonds, a \$1.5 million Urban Development Action Grant, and \$1.3 million from the developers.

The city originally received the UDAG grant as part of the Riverview Commerce Centre project, but plans for a proposed Coal Exchange Building collapsed.

Their hamburgers are good, but their grounds for excellence is the coffee

I read with delight a Courier story some mornings ago that a Krystal hamburger outlet is now under construction in Henderson, Ky., and I have heard a splendid rumor that one may be built in Evansville too.

And you may find my delight a puzzling thing — perhaps even a conundrum — since it was only recently that I made such a boring oaf of myself in extolling the alimentary virtues of White Castle hamburgers, another product entirely, and a competing one at that.

What kind of wishy-washy, fence-straddling, indecisive kind of looney am I, anyway, that I can't seem to make up my mind?

WELL, IT'S A good question, perhaps even a conundrum itself.

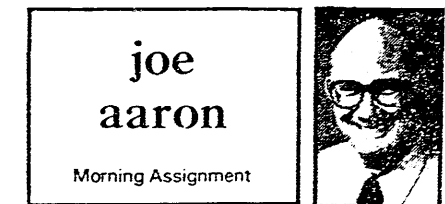
But it so happens that I am familiar with the Krystal burger too and once, many years ago when I was first exposed to it in the city of New Orleans, I found it to be a morsel of becoming scrumptiousness.

They were so close in overall taste to White Castles that even I, one of the world's more celebrated gourmets, could detect no difference.

But as well as I liked them — and I liked them well enough that they comprised at least one of my meals each day of a lingering visit there — it is not the burgers that I remember best when I think of Krystal.

It is the coffee served there that comes most readily to mind.

Now, you may be unaware of this, but in those quaint southern climes of which we speak, it is all but impossible to



joe aaron

Morning Assignment

find a cup of coffee that is anywhere near acceptable to the ordinary palate.

New Orleans coffee, almost without exception in my experience there, is chicory coffee, and chicory coffee, unless it has been subjugated by repeated applications of cream and smothered in sugar, is absolutely undrinkable.

IT IS AS bitter as a competitor's success, and unless you were brought up on it and know no better, you simply can't force it down on the first try.

So I wandered all over that charming old city, drenched daily by torrential summer rains, looking for a cup of coffee that a man not only could drink but could enjoy.

It was only when I found a street-corner Krystal, populated mostly, it seems to me in retrospect, by stubbly faced men with the wine shakes, that my quest was rewarded.

I don't know precisely what the nectar of the gods tastes like, but I have always believed that Krystal coffee came as close as anything I've ever sampled.

Thereafter, though the Krystal palace was a good, brisk

walk from my seedy hotel, I went there each morning for breakfast and returned once more during the day for a generous helping of the tiny burgers, just because of the coffee.

IT IS MY understanding that chicory found its way into southern coffee during the desperate days of the Civil War when genuine coffee was in short supply and chicory, an abysmal herb that grows thereabouts, was added to it as a "stretcher."

It was a sorry addition by even the most lenient standards, and while the people of New Orleans seemed to favor it — seemed even to find it an unparalleled treat, and boasted of it — that but hints at the narrow confines of their lives.

The people of Luxembourg serve similar coffee, but at least they have the decency to pour it into a tiny cup.

It was primarily to escape such an insult to the taste buds that I eventually wandered from New Orleans and signed on a trawler headed far out into the Gulf on a three-day shrimping expedition.

And not only did I find myself a virtual captive out there, since I was not given to swimming great distances even in my youth, I found also that their coffee was of the vile chicory variety too, only more so.

It was so much more so, in fact, that it was the only coffee I have ever drunk that had to first be sliced.

I LEARNED ALSO that shrimpers subsist almost entirely on the flounder that they bring up as a byproduct in their nets, and that flounder, though quite tasty in moderation, begins to pall after about the eighth abutting meal of it.

And I learned that when a landlubber makes genteel

inquiry as to the location of the, er, facilities, a smirking 17-year-old deckhand points casually over the ship's railing.

The shrimpers were accustomed to such primitive accommodations and used them, I must say, with a certain cosmopolitan flair, but I had to hold on with both hands and my heels while the trawler bucked like a strawberry roan.

And every time I tried to write a column on my little portable typewriter, with the table going up and down and side to side and over and under, I got sicker than even most people who died ever experienced.

Then it was my misfortune that when I got back to dry land, I was so giddy to have survived that I was spouting pure gibberish, expressing my adventurer's appreciation for the trip.

AND ONE OF the things I must have said, though I have no memory of it and can't understand how it happened, was how much I had enjoyed that wonderful Cajun coffee.

I surmise this because, a couple of weeks later when I returned home and could get a good cup of coffee in any diner in town, I found in my mailbox a gift from my shrimpboat host at Grand Isle.

It was a two-pound container of chicory coffee and a special little pot to brew it in.

I gave it to a friend who had moved here from New Orleans, and his gratitude was such that it embarrassed me.

I'm sorry to say I never looked on him quite the same after that. A nice guy, yeah, but you talk about dumb!

So welcome to the Tri-State, Krystal. And don't forget your coffee pot.