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Family, teachers mourn boy in accident

Julian Emerson
Leader-Telegram Staff

As a young boy who enjoyed staying active, 7-year-old Jordan Anderson would have been thrilled to be riding up a hill in a trailer being pulled by a tractor, one of the boy's teachers said.

"He was all boy," said Lynn Fering, who co-taught Anderson's first-grade class at Northwoods School during the 2001-02 school year. "I'm sure he was all gung-ho about doing that and would have enjoyed it."

Jordan, 4351 La Salle St., died after the tractor pulling the trailer in which he was a passenger tumbled down a steep hill shortly after 5 p.m. Sunday on Eau Claire's west side. The boy was riding in the trailer with his mother, Stephanie Schlewitz, and three other people. Two people were on the tractor.

Jordan sustained a skull fracture when the tractor and trailer tipped and fell on him. Two other people were pinned under the tractor and trailer, and one of them was treated at Luther Hospital.

Whether golfing at a local course or catching frogs in the pond of her rural Elk Mound home, Joy Zimbauer said her grandson loved outdoor activities and staying on the go.

"He was an absolute sports fanatic, and he just loved to be outside," Zimbauer said of Jordan, who affectionately called her "my grandma with white hair."

"He really would have been excited about going for

that tractor ride. That was right up his alley," she said.

Jordan often acted older than his age, Zimbauer said, taking time to comfort his mother and acting as the guardian of his 5-year-old brother, Zach.

"It always seemed like he knew the right thing to say to people at the right time," Zimbauer, Schlewitz' mother, said of Jordan, her voice tinged with emotion. "He was so looking forward to being in second grade. That really made him feel grown up."

Jordan, who attended kindergarten in Elk Mound, was one of several new faces in her classroom last year, Fering said. He was apprehensive at the beginning of the school year but experienced tremendous academic and personal growth by year's end, she said.

"He was like a flower that just blossomed before our eyes," Fering said. "We coaxed and encouraged him, and then we watched him grow. He made miraculous progress. It was wonderful to see."

Faith Higdon also taught Jordan last year and remembered him as a charming personality whose sense of humor made her classroom a more enjoyable place.

"Jordan's spark was an important part of our first-grade class," Higdon said. "He had so much potential."

Thinking about the growth Jordan experienced last school year has comforted those close to the boy.

"You always hope to reach your students that way, and at least we know it happened with him," Fering said.

Likewise, Zimbauer said she holds on to her memories of Jordan as she struggles to deal with his death. A vibrant, bright-blue butterfly she saw Monday reminded her of the joy she felt when her grandson was around.

"Losing him is so hard," she said. "He was really the light of my life."

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2-year-old boy killed falling off backhoe Monday

Staff Reports, Florence Reminder

December 30, 2004

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FLORENCE - A two-year-old boy riding on his grandfather's lap while operating a backhoe fell out of the cab and was killed when a tire ran over him Monday afternoon at an outlying area of Florence, according to Mike Minter, spokesman for the Pinal County Sheriff's Office.

Brandon McCracken Jr. of Mesa was pronounced dead at the scene.

"It was just a tragic accident," Minter said.

The boy fell off the grandfather's lap and out a window in the lower portion of the cab and under a moving tire.

The accident happened in the 29400 block of North Brandon Lane.

Minter said the incident is under investigation pending the results of an autopsy.

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News

4-year-old killed in accident

By Steve Sharp of the Daily Times staff

AZTALAN - A 4-year-old boy was killed Wednesday afternoon after he slipped beneath a skid loader his father was operating at their Aztalan residence.

Jefferson County Sheriff Paul Milbrath said this morning that his department received a 911 call at 12:50 p.m. Wednesday from John E. Zimmerman of W5805 County Trunk B in the town of Aztalan in which Zimmerman told dispatchers he had run over his 4-year-old son, Beau Zimmerman, after the child attempted to jump on the back of a skid loader for a ride.

"Mr. Zimmerman was pulling a skid loader half-full of feed, with a full-size John Deere tractor," Milbrath said. "Mr. Zimmerman pulled into the back of the barn and was backing up to the barn to unload the skid loader when Beau ran up the back of the loader and attempted to jump on the loader for a ride."

Milbrath said Beau Zimmerman then slipped off the skid loader and fell under a wheel, which ran over his head. The skid loader was carrying approximately 2,800 pounds of feed and the boy sustained severe head trauma.

According to the sheriff's department, the Fort Atkinson paramedics, Johnson Creek EMS and the Johnson Creek Fire Department also responded. A Med-Flight helicopter was dispatched to the scene but was called off by Fort Atkinson Memorial Health Services paramedics.

Jefferson County Coroner Patrick Theder was contacted. The Claussen Funeral Home of Lake Mills is assisting the family.

FRIENDS MOURN BOY KILLED IN TRACTOR ACCIDENT

MIDDLETOWN -- Twelve-year-old Vincent Graves was remembered Thursday as a boy who loved the outdoors, particularly the woods near his Chauncey Road home.

It was this kind of memory that people focused on as they tried to deal with the death of Vincent, who was killed at his home Wednesday when his older brother accidentally backed over him with a farm tractor.

A state medical examiner said Vincent died from blunt force head trauma. Police were still trying to determine Thursday exactly where Vincent was sitting when he tumbled off a flatbed trailer that was attached to the tractor. Investigators inspected the John Deere tractor but did not find anything wrong with the machinery.

A preliminary investigation shows the boys, the sons of Edward and Paula Graves, were doing farm chores at the time of the accident. Several bags of horse feed had just been loaded on the trailer.

A school bus driver who witnessed the 4:30 p.m. incident said Vincent apparently fell off the tractor when his brother, Nicholas, 16, abruptly stopped, possibly because of traffic on Chauncey Road.

Unaware Vincent had fallen, his brother backed the tractor onto him. Vincent was flown by Life Star medical helicopter to Hartford Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, police said.

Woodrow Wilson Middle School officials offered counseling Thursday to Vincent's seventh-grade colleagues and other pupils. Some of those students spent the entire day grieving the loss of their friend, said Sarah Lyons, one of Vincent's teachers.

Lyons said her students write journals every Friday, often about their upcoming weekends. Vincent frequently wrote about looking forward to things with his family, whether it was learning how to cut wood or building a pumpkin house for Halloween. He also wrote that the woods near his family's house was one of his favorite places "because it gave him peace," Lyons said.

One group of students made a banner bearing the words "We Love You Vincent."

"He was almost a throwback to old times," said Assistant Principal Vanessa Reale. "He liked farm work, he liked the outdoors and being with his friends."

"He was such a nice young man -- he always had a smile on his face," she said.

Students spent part of the day making cards for Vincent's family.

"Every card said 'Thank you for having a son that made us laugh,' or 'Thank you for having a son with such a good personality,'" she said. Though her students will ease back into regular classes, Lyons said it would not be easy.

"For any kids who need extra support, it's there for them, and will be for the rest of the year," Lyons said. "It will be a hard year for everyone."

South Fire District Chief Wayne S. Bartolotta said a debriefing was held at the firehouse late Wednesday for about 10 firefighters and police officers who responded to the tragic scene. Some emergencies, especially ones in which children are involved, can be more stressful than others, he said.

"As used to tragedy as one might think we are, we don't know how our minds and bodies are going to react to it later," Bartolotta said.

Girl, 2, dies after accident in dairy barn

Parent driving Bobcat tractor didn't see child, backed into her

Thursday, July 8th, 2004

By Alexandra Paul and Lindsey Wiebe

A two-year-old Dufresne girl died yesterday following a farm accident in which she stepped into the path of a Bobcat tractor driven by one of her parents.

RCMP said the parent did not know the child was there until it was too late.

Police would not confirm which parent was driving the Bobcat at the time of the accident. They said the parent at the wheel backed up and struck the child, who was seriously injured and died later at Health Sciences Centre.

As word of the accident spread in the farming country southeast of Winnipeg, neighbours expressed sympathy for parents Arnold and Kim Lange.

But details about the tragedy were scarce.

"I (only) heard the ambulance go screaming by," said one neighbour.

Authorities report sending an ambulance to the farm at 5:20 p.m. Tuesday.

Just minutes before, Bryann Lange, 29 months old, had wandered down the short driveway that links her family's modest bungalow to the barn where her parents raise dairy cattle.

She made her way inside to watch one of her parents clean up the barn with the aid of the Bobcat tractor.

But the parent didn't know the toddler had come to check out the noise in the barn, or that she had wandered into the path of the machine.

The parent apparently backed up and struck the child.

Yesterday at the farm, a number of women stood outside the family's bungalow, firmly turning down inquiries, while inside, other people took one sympathy call after another.

A representative from the Chief Medical Examiner's Office said there was nothing to report to the public from the autopsy yesterday.

Neighbour Marc Hutlet said he met Arnold Lange as a customer of his seed business, but didn't know how he was coping with the tragedy.

"He's very quiet, reserved, a nice person," said Hutlet, "very hardworking and dedicated."

Hutlet described the family as "like a lot of people that live in the country, very friendly."

About 10 preschoolers die every year in farm accidents in Canada, a rate 50 per cent higher than the national rate of preschool injuries resulting in death.

A study conducted by the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program found that of the deaths, 29 per cent happened with children who were run over by machinery when they were unsupervised.

Director Dr. Rob Brison said deaths like Bryann's happen all too often.

"This is certainly a tragic injury, but this is the most common pattern of fatal injury for two-year-olds who live on farms," said Brison.

"It's so unfortunate when something like that happens, it really is," said Donna Riddell, head of the Farm Safety 4 Just Kids south central Manitoba



Midwest Ag Briefs

RIVERTON TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)

6-year-old boy killed in farm accident involving brother

A 6-year-old boy was killed after he was struck by a tractor his 9-year-old brother was driving, police said.

State Police Sgt. Troy Fellows said Willard Lynn Helmuth was helping his 9-year-old brother feed cattle with a John Deere Skid Steer Thursday night (Oct. 21) at the boys' home in Mason County's Riverton Township.

Willard was killed after the older boy, who was operating the tractor, was not aware his brother was standing behind the machine and backed over him. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

"They were trying to feed cows. The brother was standing behind (the tractor). It was dark, and the brother didn't know he was behind it and he put the tractor in reverse and ran him over," Fellows told *The Muskegon Chronicle*.

The parents of the boys were home at the time of the accident but did not see it happen, Fellows said.

"It was purely accidental; it's just a shame, being only 6 years old," township fire Chief Joe Cooper told the *Ludington Daily News*.

Tractor accident kills three in family

**BY MARK HOLMBERG
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER**

A man and his son and 4-year-old grandson — three generations of a Russell County family — were fatally injured yesterday afternoon when the tractor they were riding on ran off a county road in Honaker and rolled over.

A second grandson was injured during the 3:10 accident that occurred within eyesight of the boy's grandmother, according to the Virginia state trooper who investigated the Easter weekend tragedy.

"Very, very sad," said Trooper Michael O'Quinn.

The 2000 Belarus tractor was apparently being driven by 58-year-old Alva Gene Perkins of Honaker, who was taking his son and grandsons with him to feed the cattle.

Riding with him were his son, 32-year-old Christopher Dane Perkins of Moneta, and two grandsons, 4-year-old Colton Dane Perkins and 9-year-old Devan Perkins.

Christopher Perkins had brought his family from their Roanoke-area home to his parents' home for an Easter-weekend visit, O'Quinn said.

The tractor turned off the Perkinses' driveway onto state Route 637, where it traveled about 45 feet before running off the road.

Alva, Christopher and Colton Perkins were taken to Russell County Medical Center, where they were all declared dead on arrival at 6 p.m., according to a police report.

The condition of Devan, the 9-year-old, was uncertain at press time. He was in surgery at Bristol Regional Medical Center, O'Quinn said.

The boys' grandmother, Janet Perkins, is holding up "as good as can be expected," O'Quinn said. "She's a real strong woman."

Still, the trooper added, to lose "three generations in one hit ... it's pretty hard."



TRIBUNE- PHONOGRAPH

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Wednesday, August 9, 2000

Youth killed in tragic farm accident

On Friday, August 4 Justin Kunze, age 3, died as a result of injuries suffered in a tragic accident at the family farm in the Town of Hull.

According to a Marathon County Sheriff's Department report of the incident, Justin was riding beside his father, Steven Kunze, on a model 6600 Ford tractor. They were out in a field cutting hay at approximately 4 p.m. when the

tractor hit a bump, causing Justin to fall off the tractor.

The boy fell all the way to the ground and was impacted by the left rear tractor wheel. Steven immediately stopped the tractor and attended to Justin, and medical attention was summoned. Justin was transported to St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, where he passed away as a result of injuries from the accident.

LEADER-TELEGRAM

www.leader-telegram.com

Online

4/17/01

Wednesday, April 18, 2001



Rural Wheeler 5-year-old dies in bulldozer accident

By Pamela Powers
Menomonie News Bureau

MENOMONIE -- A 5-year-old rural Wheeler girl was killed Tuesday after she was run over by a bulldozer driven by her grandfather.

Kali M. Thunstrom, N12771 Highway 25, Wheeler, was pronounced dead at her town of Wilson home by Dunn County Medical Examiner Chris Kruse.

Thunstrom died from a crushing injury, Kruse said.

The girl had been playing in her yard while her grandfather, Richard L. White Sr., 64, 12773 Highway 25, Wheeler, was operating the Caterpillar bulldozer excavating the driveway, Dunn County Sheriff Dennis Smith said.

The child apparently had jumped on the back of the bulldozer as it was backing up. She lost her grip and fell to the ground.

The blade of the machine struck the girl as she lay on the ground, Smith said.

The accident was reported to the Sheriff's Department at 7:05 p.m. Tuesday. The Dallas-Prairie Farm ambulance and Dunn County northern first responders also responded to the accident.

"It certainly is a tragedy and one that is avoidable," Smith said. "Machinery is dangerous. It is a risk to have children around equipment and other hazards."

Jim Faust, a Dunn County agriculture agent, said equipment noise makes it difficult to hear, so it can be dangerous to have children around.

"Kids shouldn't be riding on a bulldozer unless they are inside a cab and belted in." Faust said.